RURAL CHURCH LIFE IN THE MIDDLE WEST

BENSON Y. LANDIS

RURAL CHURCH LIFE IN THE MIDDLE WEST

COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS SURVEYS

TOWN AND COUNTRY DEPARTMENT
EDMUND DES. BRUNNER, Director

RURAL CHURCH LIFE IN THE MIDDLE WEST

AS ILLUSTRATED BY
CLAY COUNTY, IOWA AND JENNINGS COUNTY, INDIANA
WITH COMPARATIVE DATA FROM STUDIES OF
THIRTY-FIVE MIDDLE WESTERN COUNTIES

BY

BENSON Y. LANDIS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
MAPS AND CHARTS

NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PREFACE

THE Committee on Social and Religious Surveys was organized in January, 1921. Its aim is to combine the scientific method with the religious motive. The Committee conducts and publishes studies and surveys and promotes conferences for their consideration. It coöperates with other social and religious agencies, but is itself an independent organization.

The Committee is composed of: John R. Mott, Chairman; Ernest D. Burton, Secretary; Raymond B. Fosdick, Treasurer; James L. Barton and W. H. P. Faunce. Galen M. Fisher is Associate Executive Secretary. The offices are at 111 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

In the field of town and country the Committee sought first of all to conserve some of the results of the surveys made by the Interchurch World Movement. In order to verify some of these surveys, it carried on field studies, described later, along regional lines worked out by Dr. Warren H. Wilson * and adopted by the Interchurch World Movement. These regions are:

I. Colonial States: All of New England, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

II. The South: All the States south of Mason and Dixon's line and the Ohio River east of the Mississippi, including Louisiana.

III. The Southern Highlands Section: This section comprises about 250 counties in "The Back yards of eight Southern States."

IV. The Middle West: The States of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa and northern Missouri.

V. Northwest: Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Eastern Montana.

VI. Prairie: Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska.

VII. Southwest: Southern Missouri, Arkansas and Texas.

VIII. Range or Mountain: Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada and western Montana.

The Director of the Town and Country Survey Department for the Interchurch World Movement was Edmund deS. Brunner. He is likewise the Director of this Department for the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys.

* See Wilson, "Sectional Characteristics," *Homelands*, August, 1920.

PREFACE

Jennings County, Indiana, was surveyed originally under the supervision of Rev. Marion C. Bishop, of the Interchurch World Movement. The field work was done by Miss Martha Robison of the County Church Department of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions.

The first survey of Clay County, Iowa, was conducted under Professor George H. Von Tungeln, State Survey Supervisor of the Interchurch World Movement, and Miss Etta M. Smith, County Leader. In 1921, Mr. Benson Y. Landis, field worker of the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys, visited these counties, brought the studies up to date and secured missing information. In this task, valuable assistance was rendered in Clay County by Miss Etta Smith, now County Superintendent of Schools; and in Jennings County by the Indiana State Federation of Churches, whose secretary, Rev. Frank Merrick, spent several days assisting in the investigation.

Valuable help was given by the Home Missions Council; by the Council of Women for Home Missions through their sub-Committee on Town and Country, and by a Committee appointed jointly by the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of Churches for the purpose of coöperating with the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys in endeavoring to translate the results of the survey into action. The members of this Joint Committee on Utilizing Surveys are:

Representing the Federal Council of Churches

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Roy B. Guild
A. E. Holt
F. Ernest Johnson
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Warren H. Wilson

INTRODUCTION

THE POINT OF VIEW

THIS book is a study of the work of Protestant town and country churches in two counties in the Middle West. Its purpose is to show the effect of prosperity upon the life of the Church by describing the interaction of the Church upon these communities and of these communities upon the Church. This survey, therefore, does not attempt to deal directly with the spiritual effect of any church upon the life of individuals or groups. Such results are not measurable by the foot rule of statistics or by survey methods. It is possible, however, to weigh the concrete accomplishments of churches. These actual achievements are their fruits and "by their fruits ye shall know them."

The two counties studied in this book are Jennings, Indiana, and Clay, Iowa. Many considerations entered into their choice. For one thing, it must be borne in mind that this book, while complete in itself, is also part of a larger whole. From among the one thousand county surveys completed or nearly completed by the Interchurch World Movement, twenty-six counties, situated in the nine most representative rural regions of America, were selected for intensive study. In this way it was hoped to obtain a bird's-eye view of the religious situation as it exists in the more rural areas of the United States. All the counties selected were chosen with the idea that they were fair specimens of what was to be found throughout the area of which they are a part.

In selecting the counties an effort was made to discover those which were typical not merely from a statistical standpoint but also from the social and religious problems they represented. For example, the two counties in the Middle West described in this pamphlet were chosen because they are representative of large sections throughout this area.

It is recognized that there are reasons why exceptions may be taken to the choice of counties. No area is completely typical of every situation. A careful study of these counties, however, leads to the conclusion that they are fair specimens of the region they are intended to represent.

All these studies have been made from the point of view of the Church recognizing, however, that social and economic conditions affect its life. For instance, it is evident that various racial groups influence church life differently. Germans and Swedes usually tend toward liturgical denominations; the Scotch to non-liturgical. Again, if there is economic pressure and heavy debt, the Church faces spiritual handicaps and needs a peculiar type of ministry. Because of the importance of social and economic factors in the life of the Church the opening chapters of this book have been devoted to a description of these factors. At the first glance some of these facts may appear irrelevant, but upon closer observation will be found to have a bearing upon the main theme—the problem of the Church.

Naturally the greatest amount of time and study has been devoted to the churches themselves; their history, equipment and finances; their members, services and church organizations; their Sunday schools, young societies and community programs, have all been carefully investigated and evaluated.

Intensive investigation has been limited to the distinctly rural areas and to those centers of population which have less than five thousand inhabitants. In the case of towns larger than this an effort has been made to measure the service of such towns to the surrounding countryside, but not to study each church and community in detail.

The material in this book itself will present a composite picture of the religious conditions within these two counties. The appendices present the methodology of the survey and the definitions employed. They also include in tabular form the major facts of each county as revealed by the investigation. These appendices are intended especially to meet the needs of church executives, and students of sociology who desire to carry investigation further than is possible in the type of presentation used for the main portion of the book.

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RURAL CHURCH LIFE IN THE MIDDLE WEST

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CHAPTER I

Community Life in the "Valley of Democracy"

SOME call the Middle West the greater and others the real America. John H. Finley says it is "in more than one sense, the heart of America," and he has called it the "Valley of the New Democracy." * Meredith Nicholson writes glowingly of the "Valley of Democracy." To E. L. Masters it is "The Great Valley." Compared with other regions the Middle West is undoubtedly typically American. The early settlers on the Atlantic seaboard imitated European standards in community and church life, but the mass of settlers who swept into the Middle West followed precedent little and built towns and institutions of their own. Here are the real Americans in greatest numbers, the men and women who inherited from their pioneer ancestors those outstanding traits for which the American is famous.

The term Middle West has many meanings. The region plays a considerable part in directing the nation's thinking. Its communities are known for their spirit of progressiveness, their friendliness, their "we-feeling." It is our largest and most prosperous agricultural section. From it have come most of the important agricultural movements of our history and the majority of our agricultural leaders. It is called the Valley of the New Democracy because here have been carried on some of the pioneer experiments in popular government in the nation. Here were built up the first state governments with real machinery to serve the people. The farmer-legislators led the way in establishing the large state universities and colleges for agriculture, with instructions to serve the people in the most practical way. Following out the ideal of endeavoring to give the best in education to the last man and the last woman on the last farm, the universities have carried on vigorous

* "The French in the Heart of America," by John H. Finley.

programs of extension, until the privileges of the state university are at least as near as every farmer's mail box. *Moral idealism,* says Prof. E. A. Ross in "Changing America," was the moving force among the first colonists on the shores of the Atlantic; *social idealism* is the force which is most manifest among the people in the Middle West.

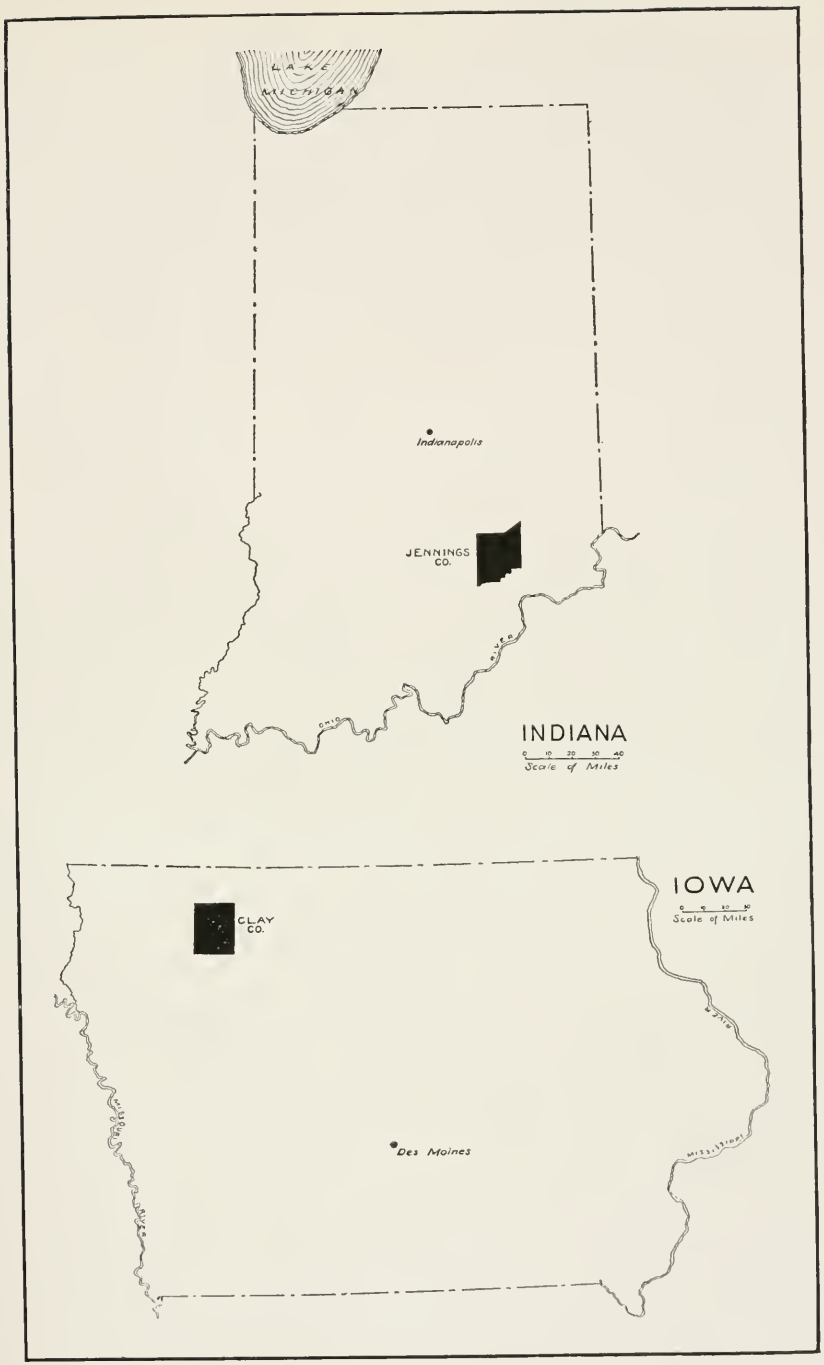
The region has, of course, no boundaries, but for practical purposes and as a good workable unit, with fairly uniform characteristics, many denominational and home mission executives define as the Middle West the six states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa. This definition is accepted for purposes of the present study.

To-day most of it is a part of America's great industrial zone, whose boundaries run west of Minneapolis, south to include St. Louis, then east to the Atlantic to take in Washington, D. C. Here are the majority of the largest cities, more than half the people of the nation, most of the wealth, and three-fourths of the foreign population.

Once these Middle Western states were classed as "predominantly agricultural." They are so no longer. The preliminary reports on the 1920 census show that here, as in the nation, more people were gainfully employed in manufacture than in agriculture. Only in Iowa, where farming was found to engage 42 per cent of the state's workers, was agriculture in the lead. In Illinois the proportion of earners who were farmers was 19 per cent, the lowest record of any of this group of states. But if there had never been a Middle West with its cattle and grain there would never have been a St. Paul, a Chicago or even a Wall Street as big as it is. So contends the Middle Westerner with pride—and with some justification.

Thomas Nixon Carver says, in speaking of most of these states: "The corn belt is the most considerable area in the world in which agriculture is uniformly prosperous. The people engaged in the corn-growing industry are an independent, progressive class, drawing their sustenance from the soil and not from other people." * Farming is diversified though based on corn growing. Nine-tenths of the corn is fed to cattle. Oats, wheat, milk, eggs, fruit and vegetables are also produced in large quantities. Half of the farmers have automobiles, the proportion of farmers with one or more ranging from 40.2 per cent in Michigan to 73.1 per cent in

* From *World's Work*, Dec., 1903, quoted in "Readings in Rural Sociology," by John Phelan.



INDIANA AND IOWA

Locating Jennings and Clay Counties

Iowa. Only in the Northwest are there proportionately more automobiles on farms. These states have more pure-bred livestock than any other region. The average farm has 116 acres, compared with the average of 148 for the nation. The improved acreage per farm is, however, ninety compared to seventy-eight for the country. One farmer in seven is foreign-born, the Middle West standing fourth highest among the nine regions in this respect. Foreign-born farmers come mainly from Germany, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Austria, in the order named. Isolation is gone from farm homes in the Middle West. The population density is more than two and one-half times the average of the nation. The rural

A TYPICAL HOME IN THE CORN BELT

delivery, the telephone, the automobile, the social and economic organizations, the division of land into smaller farms, have all helped to banish loneliness which was the lot of the men and women in generations past.

The Middle West has probably as many strong town and country churches to-day as any other region of the United States. At least it has our largest churches. As a result of surveys of thirty-five midwestern counties, 457 rural communities and 1,368 churches, it is possible to make some comparison with extensive church surveys of other regions. In the Middle West there is one town and country church for every 509 people. The interdenominational organizations recommend an ideal of one Protestant church to every 1,000 people. Four out of the nine regions, into which for purposes of survey the United States was divided, on the average come close to that figure or reach it. The Middle West stands as middle ground between the overchurched and underchurched sec-

tions of the country. Only 24 per cent of the town and country congregations have an active membership of twenty-five or less. This is a lower percentage of small churches than is found in any other region. Forty-seven per cent of the churches have, however, active memberships of less than fifty, although the average church has ninety-three active members. This again is a better showing than that of any other region. Only 21 per cent of the rural churches have ministers who give their entire time to only one church. Four other regions reach a higher proportion. Thirty-nine per cent of the rural communities have full-time resident pas-

GOOD ROADS ARE AN ASSET TO THE FARMER OF THE CORN BELT

tors. In this respect only one region, the Prairie, makes a better record. The number of ministers with some college or seminary training is only 37 per cent of the total. Six regions either reach or exceed this percentage. The number of Protestant church members is equal to 18 per cent of the population. Two other regions have proportionately more people in the churches. The Middle West excels all other regions in the low proportion of its ministers who follow other occupations, the figure being 9.28 per cent.

Clay County, Iowa

The more prosperous sections of the Middle West are represented in this study by the church and community survey of Clay County, Iowa, which lies in the northwestern part of the state, six

hours by train from Des Moines. It is crossed by branches of two corn-carrying railroads. In road building it is one of the leading counties of Iowa, having expended $166,000 for new work and maintenance in 1920, and having seventy miles of hard-surfaced roads. The average value of land in 1920 was $218 per acre, while the average for the state was $200. Clay County is just south of the lake region which has become a summer resort. With its famous black land, which never misses a crop, and its rolling surface, it is, in physical characteristics, a typical Iowa county. It was settled soon after 1850 and organized as a county in 1858. Its population increased from fifty-two people in 1860 to 13,401 in 1900. Its story is one of "how homes were built, farms marked, towns constructed, wealth amassed and civilization established—all in the space of one life-time."

Clay County is one of the ninety Iowa counties which lost population between 1900 and 1910, but it quickly recovered and by 1920 the population was more than 2,000 in excess of the figures of 1900. There has been some industrial development at Spencer, the county seat, a town of 4,800 people, but the gain is mainly accounted for by the good fortune of the rapidly retiring farmers in getting buyers and tenants to take up practically all the farms. Among the county's 15,660 people, 10 per cent are foreign-born, 17 per cent native-born of foreign parentage and 11 per cent native-born of mixed parentage. The large majority are naturalized. These figures are very nearly the same as those for the entire state. As in the state as a whole, Clay County has drawn most of its immigrants from Germany, Sweden and Denmark. Her foreign-born are thrifty, patriotic and prosperous, the best of farmers and citizens. The state census for 1915 records that 2,475 people in Clay County were engaged in manufacturing, trade, professional, domestic and personal service, while the rest were members of the 1,769 farmers' families. The entire county, including Spencer, which is incorporated as a city, is considered in this survey.

Clay County is divided into twelve "communities," the "community" being the trade area of hamlet, village or town. Each one of these has its surrounding group of farmers who habitually come to the trade center. Within the boundaries of this trade area is also found provision for recreation, religion and education, so that to a considerable degree the people who are a part of the trade area also have these other activities in common. The map on page 45 shows the community boundaries with heavy broken lines. Those strips of territory not included within the bounds of one community

are the so-called neutral areas in which the farmers divide their trade between two centers. There was careful consultation with

Courtesy of Rural Sociology Section, Iowa State College of Agriculture.

IOWA HOME PRODUCTS

bankers and storekeepers as to the limits of each community. Three specimen communities may be used as typical illustrations.

Everly is one of the strong communities, with a greater village population than the average and a consolidated school. Here the

farmers have not organized coöperatives, but other organizations are well developed. The band, composed principally of young men, frequently holds a community night which is a social affair for the entire community. The German club has a building of its own, and to most of the families of the community is a real social center. Here are held dances and socials as well as the annual Farmers' Institute. There are four lodges, including one for women. In connection with the rest-room at the bank is a public library, to which one hundred volumes were donated by the people of Everly, while an equal number is brought in each month from the state

A SNUG PARSONAGE

Home of the pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church, North of Everly, Clay County

Traveling Library Commission. The Women's Club bears the expense of shipping the books and members of the club serve as volunteer librarians. The demand for books has proved as great from farmers as from villagers.

Three churches serve this community—a Lutheran and a Methodist Episcopal in the village and a Dutch Reformed in the country. Forty-six per cent of the population of 1,314 are active members in churches. The Lutheran and Dutch Reformed serve respectively those of German and Dutch descent, while the members of the Methodist Episcopal are made up mainly of descendants of the earliest settlers from the Middle West or eastern states. Two of the churches have resident pastors. The Methodist Episcopal and the Dutch Reformed have each a Ladies' Aid and a Young People's Society. The big needs of Everly from the point of view of organization are work among boys and girls in the churches,

coöperative economic organization among farmers and some organized men's work in the churches. On the whole, however, by comparison with the average community, Everly has its organizations well developed and functioning.

By far the best organized community is Spencer, the county seat. Here are one of the oldest Farmers' Coöperative Grain Elevators and a livestock shipping association. Among the industries are two creameries, a razor factory and a cement tile factory. Spencer has good hotels, stores, garages, banks, and much of the trade of the entire county is carried on here. The town has a population of 4,800 and there are at least 1,200 more people in the adjacent open country. The community extends six miles north, west and south, and five miles east. The public schools, which include two fine high schools, and the Lincoln Boys' Club of the Methodist Episcopal church, with its excellent building, furnish organized athletics. There are two moving-picture theaters, two pool-rooms, two newspapers, nine lodges, and eight other social organizations, in addition to numerous organizations within the churches. A public Carnegie Library and a hospital offer sanity to mind and body.

Most of the eleven churches are well organized, nine being in the town and two in the open country. Nine have resident pastors and parsonages. By denomination the churches are as follows: Congregational, two; Evangelical Association, one; Seventh Day Adventist, one; Baptist, one; Methodist Episcopal, one; Danish Lutheran, one; Disciples, one; Evangelical Lutheran, one; Swedish Lutheran, one; Protestant Episcopal, one. All of the churches have good buildings, and the Disciples are putting up a splendid new structure to cost $50,000. The Ministerial Association meets monthly and has done a great deal toward development of fellowship and coöperation among the churches in Spencer, and to some extent among those of the county. There are five pastors in the Association, which always invites each new minister to join it. It meets for discussion of problems and fellowship, and it has also held a very fine two-day conference on religious education for all the churches of the county, at which denominational experts in religious education were present.

Smaller, less organized, but possessing the usual vigor and spirit is Cornell, which has a consolidated school, and a successful Farmers' Grain Company with sixty members. Farmers in this community belong to the Cornell-McClay Coöperative Live Stock Shipping Association. The only place for recreation is a dance-hall, also used as a skating rink. The population is 250, of whom 200

live on farms. The community boundaries extend one and one-half miles north, 242 miles west, 142 miles south and one mile east. The church has a non-resident minister who is able to give the community Sunday morning services. He also conducts a very interesting and well attended mid-week young people's meeting.

Other communities might in the same manner be described in more detail. Nearly every one has some distinctive feature, even though all communities have the same economic resources and general characteristics. Dickens has the first coöperative creamery in the county, five lodges, four other social organizations. Langdon has three coöperatives among farmers. Peterson has two coöperatives among farmers, four lodges and three clubs, including a civic club which has varied activities. Greenville, with only 450 people, has a moving-picture theater and a consolidated school. Almost every weekly issue of the newspapers contains news of some significant event which means social progress. For instance, the issues of the two Spencer papers for May 4, 1921, contained notices of the following four events which give an idea of what is being done in the active and vigorous communities of Clay County: (1) The county high school track meet is held at Spencer. (2) The Commercial Club of Spencer makes plans to beautify the town. (3) Farm Bureau women of Freeman Township organize a club. (4) Architect submits plans to the American Legion for a Community Building for Spencer.

Jennings County, Indiana

Not all of the Middle West is as prosperous and fortunate as Clay County. The other side of the picture is found in Jennings County, Indiana, the facts from the survey of which are used for comparative purposes. Taken together, the two counties are not far from making an average for the section; separately, they are specimens of two different types of counties.

Jennings County lies in southeastern Indiana, a section with characteristics very different from those of northwestern Iowa. North Vernon, the railroad and commercial center of the county, is about two and one-half hours from Indianapolis, Cincinnati or Louisville. The county is part of that great belt of land which lies between the north and south and shares the characteristics of both. Here farming is much more diversified than in Iowa, and on account of the low, acid soil conditions are far less favorable than in the more prosperous sections of Indiana. Land values of Jen-

nings County are one-fourth those of Clay County, and about one-third of the average for the state of Indiana. The population has shown a steady decrease. In 1920 it was 13,297, a figure which is 2,500 less than that for 1900 and 3,200 less than that for 1880, the year of maximum population. Eighty-four per cent of the people are native white of native parentage; negroes make up only 2 per cent of the population, and the remaining 14 per cent, composed of those of foreign birth or extraction, is drawn mainly from Germany and Ireland, and for the most part is not of recent immigration.

Jennings County was settled in 1815 and is therefore one of the old sections of the Middle West. It is at least two generations older

B. & O. STATION, NORTH VERNON, JENNINGS COUNTY

than Clay County, Iowa, but its community life is not so well organized. Fourteen communities have as their center a hamlet, village or town, with an average population of 950 people.

A specimen community of this county is Hayden. Located in the west-central part of the county and extending three and one-half miles north, three miles west, four miles south and three miles east, Hayden has a population of 1,391, of whom 235 live in the hamlet. Dairying and vegetable-raising are the chief branches of farming practiced. There is a canning factory which in season employs about fifty persons. The only organizations in addition to church and school are five lodges. Hayden is justly proud of its consolidated school. It has one Methodist and one Baptist church. Neither has a parsonage and both have non-resident ministers, the Methodist pastor living twenty miles, and the Baptist minister nine miles from

his parish. The combined church membership is 221, of whom 152, or 11 per cent of the population, are active. The combined Sunday school roll is 140. St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, with an enrollment of fifty-eight families and a resident priest, is located in the open country in the southern part of the community.

Nebraska is an example of the less developed communities. Except for a few traders, the hamlet of seventy-five people is made up entirely of retired farmers. Farming is well diversified, with corn and livestock as the chief sources of income. There are few com-

RECTORY OF ST. JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, HAYDEN, JENNINGS COUNTY

munity activities, and especially in winter there is little recreation or social life. The one lodge for men is not very strong. There are two dance-halls and one public hall not extensively used. The elementary school has two teachers and there is no high school. The community extends about two miles in each direction. There is a Baptist church with a non-resident pastor who follows another occupation and also has two other churches, and the church program is practically confined to the services in church and Sunday school. The Roman Catholic church is also neglected, so far as the time of the priest is concerned, since he is responsible for two other points.

Every community in Jennings County now has a branch of the

public library, and farmers from all parts of the county belong to the farm bureau. In Brewersville, an abandoned church building has been turned into a community hall. Grayford, though small, has the livest grange organization in the county. San Jacinto, almost entirely open country, has two lodges, two public halls and a large new brick school building. Vernon, the county seat, has made the first real attempt at church federation. It failed, but such movements are signs of promise. North Vernon, the commercial center, which is trying to become the county seat, has a Chamber of Commerce with an annual budget of $7,000. Last year it gave $1,000 to the War Mothers to start a hospital fund. Here is more community spirit than elsewhere in the county. Citizens of North Vernon were leaders in the purchase of the excellent park site which lies between the two Vernons, and which has been presented to the state.

CHAPTER II

Economic and Social Tendencies

The Coöperative Movement

BECAUSE of its extent and significant results the coöperative movement represents one of the most important tendencies in the agricultural life of the Middle West at the present time. In 1907 the first Clay County farmers' elevator was organized in Spencer with a capital of $25,000. One hundred and seventy farmers bought stock, none of whom were allowed more than twenty shares. A full-time manager was employed to sell corn, oats, hogs and cattle and to buy coal, feed, flour and salt. Voting privileges were according to the amount of stock held. By 1921 the paid-up capitalization had been increased to $75,000. During 1920, 125 car-loads of grain were sold and purchases included 6,000 tons of coal, seven cars of salt and twelve cars of flour. In 1920, despite the fall of wholesale prices of farm products, the grain elevator association declared a modest dividend. The cooperative seems now to be on a sound basis, and the farmers are well satisfied with the organization, especially with the methods of selling grain. Seven other communities now have similar organizations, the total membership reaching 1260.

Since December, 1919, Clay County has experienced the second period of coöperative organization. In that month, under the leadership of the employed county agent of the Farm Bureau, a cooperative live stock shipping association was formed at Fostoria. This is the type of organization which has been spreading at unheard-of speed during the past few years in Iowa and other stock-shipping states. The Fostoria coöperative was organized with ninety-five members, all farmers who shipped live stock. No stock was sold to float the enterprise. A membership fee of one dollar was charged and at business meetings each man was, of course, allowed one vote. No local equipment is needed. The manager receives a commission of eight cents per hundred pounds of live stock sold. One-half of one per cent of the gross receipts is put into the reserve fund to be used to pay for losses of cattle in transit. At the end of one year's business the membership increased to 122. Eighty car-

loads of stock had been shipped, valued at $180,000. The total saving to the shippers, due to the elimination of the local private buyer and economy of operation, was estimated conservatively at $6,400. Eight communities now have a coöperative association of this type, and 416 farmers are members. During the year ended 1920 they shipped 256 car-loads of live stock, valued at $556,200 and the estimated saving to the farmers as a result of their coöperative venture was $17,280.

M. E. CHURCH, FOSTORIA, CLAY COUNTY

Two coöperative creameries that have recently been organized, with 140 members, bring the total number of coöperative organizations in Clay County up to eighteen. Nine of the twelve communities have each one or more of these eighteen enterprises. Some farmers in the communities without coöperatives belong to those in the surrounding villages, and thus the grain elevators and the shipping associations are practically within reach of every farmer in the county. In Jennings County, Indiana, on the other hand, where much less live stock is raised, the coöperative shipping association is on a country-wide scale. Three communities also have Grange or Gleaners organizations which do coöperative buying.

The grain elevators and the new live stock shipping organizations,

which have been mainly built up within the last five years, are the chief coöperative organizations in the state of Iowa. According to a survey by Dr. E. G. Nouse, of the State Agricultural College, published in 1921, the live stock shipping organizations number 647, but many of these, Dr. Nouse's survey shows, are handling too small an amount of stock to survive. The problem for such organizations now is: "Expand, combine or die." One hundred cars of stock a year is said to be the minimum which an association should handle, and the ideal should be 500 to 1,000 cars yearly. In Clay County the average is only thirty-two car-loads a year. The State College of Agriculture has greatly assisted the coöperative move-

Courtesy of Rural Sociology Section, Iowa State College of Agriculture.

COÖPERATION IN FULL SWING

Coöperative threshing rink in a prosperous farming section of Iowa

ment by providing short courses for managers in various parts of the state during the fall of 1921.

In the Middle West coöperatives are at least as numerous, in proportion to the total number of rural communities, as in any other region. Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan were among the seven states having the largest number of farmers engaged in cooperative selling, according to the figures of the Federal Census for 1920. Iowa, Wisconsin and Ohio were among the six states which had the largest number of farmers doing coöperative purchasing. The majority of the Middle West coöperatives are on the one-man, one-vote plan, distribute dividends by patronage instead of by the amount of stock held, tend to limit members to producers and limit the amount of stock held to insure democracy of control. A minority adopts the "non-stock" method. When this is done the

producers' contracts, agreeing to deliver supplies to the local coöperative, form the capital against which the organization borrows money to build a plant and to start business. Almost half the communities in these states have at least one coöperative grain elevator, shipping association, truck exchange, purchasing organization, creamery or cheese factory.

Both the local coöperative grain elevator and the live stock shipping association are to have national sales agencies as a result of the plans of the American Farm Bureau Federation. The United

Courtesy of Rural Sociology Section, Iowa State College of Agriculture.

WHERE NEW YORK GETS ITS BUTTER

A coöperative creamery in Iowa from which butter is shipped direct to New York

States Grain Growers, Inc., the grain selling coöperative, had seventy elevators in Iowa as members at the end of 1921. The Farm Bureau's Committee of Fifteen, which laid plans for national coöperative marketing of live stock, is first organizing commission houses to sell the stock of the local associations at the terminal markets. The plans of the farmers do not stop with the formation of the local, which, unfederated, merely competes with its neighbors. They are going all the way to the door of the milling and packing plant with their products, supplanting with a farmer controlled agency a second middleman in addition to the local buyer. When the local stock shipper not only controls the local association, but also becomes a shareholder in a central agency like the United States Grain Growers and Farmers' Commission firms, the farmer thus adds to

his income some of the accustomed profits of the local buyer and the city commission firm.

Land Speculation and Farm Tenancy

That the black land in the cornbelt would some day sell for as much as $500 an acre might once have been regarded as the wildest of predictions. Nevertheless, this is what happened in 1919, and the Iowa farmer plunged into speculation in consequence. Farming began to pay and farm values rose as part of other upward movements of prices during the last twenty years. The brisk bidding for land was such that few could resist it. In Clay County, land was worth an average of $218 per acre in 1920, an increase of 300 per cent over figures for 1910 and almost 700 per cent more than the values of 1900. Farm values in Iowa used to increase 10 per cent per annum, but between 1900 and 1910, according to the census figures, the increase was more than 200 per cent, an average of 20 per cent per year, and during 1910-1920 the increase was about 330 per cent, or 33 per cent per annum. It was conservatively estimated that between 10 and 20 per cent of the farms in the state were sold in 1919. Imagine a population in such flux, and the consequent problems of pastors, teachers and social workers. In Jennings County, Indiana, land values have increased almost 100 per cent in the last decade, and there were fewer farms in 1920 than in 1910 or 1900. Indiana's farm land in 1920 was worth almost double its value in 1910 and more than three times its value in 1900. A similar phenomena has occurred in the other mid-western states, some of the most significant increases being recorded in Illinois, one of the most prosperous states.

The shifting population due to frequent selling would alone present a formidable problem, but the large amount of selling was also one of the causes of the increase in the proportion of farm renters. In Clay County the proportion of tenants was 51.5 per cent in 1920, an increase of 9 per cent over the census report for 1900. In Jennings County, which has become a section of farm owners, only 12.8 per cent of the farms were operated by tenants in 1920, this being an increase of only 4 per cent over the proportion in 1900. Throughout the Middle West during the past twenty years tenantry has increased 7 per cent in Iowa, 3.4 per cent in Illinois, 8 per cent in Indiana, 1 per cent in Wisconsin, 2 per cent in Ohio, with no data as yet available for Michigan. Another important reason for the increase in tenantry is that land rents are usually equal to less

Courtesy of Rural Sociology Section, Iowa State College of Agriculture.

OWNERSHIP AND TENANCY

Above is a fine type of Iowa homestead, owned by the farmer. Below is a home that has been rented for years to successive tenants. It is in one of the best farming sections of Iowa, but though picturesque, is poverty-stricken

than an ordinary 6 or 7 per cent interest on the value of the farm. In Iowa rents are equal to only between 3 and 4 per cent of the value of the property. It is cheaper to rent than to buy. The fact that the war put much hard cash into the farmers' hands operated to make increases of farm tenantry much less than had been expected. The tenant's lease is usually for a period of one year. That makes his place in the community less secure than the owner's. Surveys of 320 specimen tenant farms in Indiana, Illinois and Missouri by the Interchurch World Movement showed that the tenants have been on their farms an average of 6.3 years, while the average term of occupancy among 236 owners is 12.6 years.

There is naturally among tenants a struggle to get to the better farms. Fortunately, however, there is not so much shifting among the tenants in the corn belt as in some other states, while almost 85 per cent of those who start on the way to ownership eventually reach the goal. First the farm boy works at home, then hires out, next becomes a tenant and finally an owner. The boys may skip one or two stages, but most of them go through the four. We have nowhere, as has Europe, the group which is doomed to remain in the hired man stage. But the length of the hired man and tenant stages has increased, so that it takes probably nine years longer to acquire a farm now than it did thirty or forty years ago. The young farmer and his family must struggle that much longer. There is less money to be spent for the children's education and health, since the boys and girls are well into adolescence before the father becomes an owner.*

Another aspect of the problem is the heavily mortgaged farmer. He has been working against tremendous odds since the price sag of 1920. Speculation stopped at that time. The farmer was face to face with the hard task of paying a big mortgage with the most slender margin of profit on corn and cattle. It is estimated that farmers in the corn belt received about five cents an hour, on an average, for their long hours of labor in 1921. That means that a good many received nothing. Studies made in Indiana in the fall of 1921, with land values put at $125 an acre, showed that Indiana farmers received only 2.05 cents an hour for their own labor and 1.02 cents an hour in return for horse labor. The significance of these figures becomes apparent when it is realized that 42.2 hours of man labor and 50.6 hours of horse labor are required to produce an acre of corn, according to figures of production in seven corn producing states. Many men cannot hope to pay their debts in a

* See "Survey to Service," by H. Paul Douglass, pp. 154-155.

lifetime. Others cannot meet interest payments. Foreclosures are frequent. It was reported, in January, 1922, that thousands of Iowans were being driven from their farms through foreclosures. Those who bought at the highest prices naturally suffer most from the reaction. The seriousness of the situation cannot easily be overemphasized.

In Clay County many farmers were working under tremendous handicaps in 1921. In Jennings, the situation was not so acute, as

"CREDIT" TO THE COMMUNITY

The bank at Royal, Clay County. Through the assistance of the War Finance Corporation the banks have been able to extend much-needed credit to the farmers

there was less inflation. In neither of these counties probably is the situation so serious as in other parts of the Middle West. The proportion of owned farms mortgaged remained practically the same during the last ten years. The ratio of debt to value increased, however, by 5 per cent in Jennings and by 4 per cent in Clay County. In the middle western states the proportion of owned farms with mortgage debt has increased roughly as follows during the last ten years: Iowa, 8 per cent; Indiana, 3 per cent; Ohio, 3 per cent; Wisconsin, 11 per cent; Illinois, 4 per cent. Furthermore, the ratio of debt to value was higher in 1920 than in 1910 in three of these states. The exceptions are Iowa and Illinois where this ratio did not change.

There are alleviating forces at work. The water is slowly being squeezed out of land valuations but at a tremendous cost and after many unfortunate experiences through foreclosures. In the matter of tenancy, one way to help both owner and tenant is to introduce more widely the crop rent instead of the cash rent system. Cash rent is unfair to the owner when prices are rising and as unfair to the tenant when they are falling. Another aid to rehabitation will be the longer lease. The coöperatives are doing their part in obtaining increased income for products. Lower freight rates will assist, and it appears that loans of the War Finance Corporation to banks and coöperatives have proved a really constructive measure. The assistance of the War Finance Corporation has enabled banks to give longer terms to farmers on crop loans, a policy which was always desirable in view of the fact that the farmer has only one turn-over a year.

Consolidation of Schools

In all parts of the country, the movement to consolidate the traditional one-room schools is spreading rapidly. It is estimated that at the close of 1921 upwards of 2,000,000 children, living in 68,000 old rural school districts, were moved to 14,000 consolidated schools. "The little red school house" has served its day, and it is a matter of pride now for a community or county to be able to point to a large number of these small buildings which are "abandoned through consolidation."

The middle western states have shared in this movement. Illinois has made a start with seventy-eight consolidated schools, but it still has 10,000 one-room structures. Wisconsin has eighty consolidated schools; Michigan consolidated thirty schools in 1921, and Ohio has made great progress with 900 centralized or consolidated schools to her credit. Indiana and Iowa, where the two specimen counties of this study are situated, have probably made most progress of all. The former has 1,000 schools consolidated and 4,000 one-room buildings abandoned. Iowa had seventeen consolidated schools in twelve counties in 1913. In that year the state passed a law encouraging consolidation, with the result that in five years 221 more schools were consolidated, and to-day there are 400. By July, 1921, the state had discarded 3,308 one-room buildings, and at Iowa's present rate the "little red school houses" will have vanished completely in another eight years. Fortunately, too, the law of Iowa provides that the better the equipment for teaching

RELICS OF THE PAST

Above: An old school abandoned because of consolidation. Below: One of the few remaining log cabins in Jennings County, Indiana

agriculture and domestic science provided by the local community, the greater the amount of aid received from the State Department of Education.

Clay County has abandoned thirty-one one-room buildings; Jennings County twenty-one. As a result, seven of the twelve communities in Clay County have well equipped consolidated schools and transport pupils at public expense. In Jennings County three of the fourteen communities have consolidated schools. Clay County was still in the period of "growing pains" when the survey was

Courtesy of Rural Sociology Section Iowa State College of Agriculture

THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE SUPERSEDED

One of Iowa's Consolidated Schools, serving the village and adjacent countryside

made in 1921, and the merits of consolidation were still under discussion. The common opinion in Clay County, as in Jennings, was, however, that the consolidated school had brought many benefits. Consolidation has meant a multiplication of opportunities for the rural boy and girl. The consolidated school is large enough to command the services of a competent principal or superintendent. Attendance records are better. Pupils can be better graded. Agriculture, domestic science, manual training, sanitation, etc., can be more efficiently taught. The better teachers are attracted to and held by the consolidated school. The equipment is superior to that of the small, one-room structure. Amusements, athletics and social affairs for the community have been more readily organized. Un-

doubtedly the consolidated schools have made an important contribution to the life of the two counties.

Interest in Public Health

When the bill to establish the National Children's Bureau was before Congress, a leading Senator sneeringly remarked that he opposed the measure because it placed babies on the level with pigs—a statement which was not very wide of the mark, except that the Senator omitted to mention that babies, so far as governmental measures were concerned, had always been regarded as a little lower than pigs. In many sections of rural America even to-day there

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL AT ROYAL, CLAY COUNTY

is better public or governmental provision for the care of sick cattle than of children. This is not, however, the attitude in most sections of the Middle West, where a large number of counties employ public health nurses. Work of this character was begun in Clay County in April, 1919, and it is supported by the four Red Cross Societies in the communities of Spencer, Everly, Langdon, and Dickens. Plans were made to have two nurses, but only one could be obtained. In the first sixteen months of this service all the schools of the county had been visited, and reports had been made on the physical condition of the pupils. Two thousand nine hundred and ninety-seven pupils, or about nine-tenths of the enrollment, had been inspected, and only 279 had a perfect bill of health. One thousand and seventy children, or more than one-third, were 7 per cent or worse underweight. In a prosperous county of the corn belt, where food is plentiful, it was found that many lessons of

diet and nutrition needed to be learned, while defects of teeth, nose and throat were numerous. The nurse in charge has also organized and supervised seven first aid classes and has given health instruction to children during her visits to schools.

Throughout the Middle West great progress has been made in the care of public health during the last few years. Wisconsin had forty-five county public health nurses in 1920 and thirty-five health centers in operation. Illinois has 199 nurses at work outside of Chicago and Cook County, a majority of whom do either part time or full service in town and country. Sixty counties have at least one nurse. In May, 1921, Indiana had forty-two county nurses and there were twenty-five positions open. In Ohio forty-five counties now have full time health commissioners, and thirty-three Red Cross nurses are at work. Iowa has forty-seven Red Cross public health nurses and Michigan sixty-four, the latter having more Red Cross nurses than any other state. In the six states considered the Red Cross had 291 public health nurses in 1921. The large majority of these are county nurses and therefore reach the rural as well as the urban population. Most progress in the Red Cross program has been made since 1919, and it is increasingly popular. The Red Cross Nurse does public school, maternity, industrial or tuberculosis nursing, as the local chapter or coöperating organizations desire.

More and Better Libraries

The extension of libraries is a movement still in its younger days, but one that is making much progress and that gives evidence in its results of the vision and spirit of service dominating the social and educational agencies of the Middle West. The little library at Everly, in Clay County, is typical of the local libraries which are beginning to extend their influence beyond the bounds of the village to the farmers in the open country. The Woman's Club supplies the volunteer librarians for this institution. The library is in the rest room which the bank has opened for farmers' wives. Half of the two hundred books are from the state traveling library. Books are free to all and there is as much call from farmers as from villagers.

The work done by the library of Jennings County, Indiana, might well be imitated by most counties in America. The library was erected in 1918, and is supported by taxation. There are two librarians, one doing local work at North Vernon, and the other

establishing and serving branches in the villages and country districts. By 1921 twenty such branches had been established in all the community centers and in homes in some remote sections. Thus books are within easy reach of every person in the county. The circulation of one of these small posts has been as high as 1,000 books a month, which shows that the books are wanted and are being read. The county library building is also used for public meetings.

The library in the city of Spencer, Iowa, was organized in 1883. It continued to grow until 1903, when efforts were made to get a

A BOON TO THE COMMUNITY

The County library at North Vernon, Jennings County

Carnegie library. Spencer in due time received $10,000 from Mr. Carnegie, on the condition that it agreed to raise $1,000 yearly for maintenance. This money has been raised by taxation. The library makes a small charge for books to people outside of Spencer. The number of country people taking books is not known but is said to be very small. In Clay County only Spencer and Everly have libraries.

The effects of library extension can easily be measured. To the people on the farms and the smaller communities comes a widened horizon, a touch with the outer world not hitherto experienced. To the young people who have completed the local school course, the extension library affords a means of continuing their education, at least to some extent. The books sent out by the State traveling libraries are usually selected by experts with social vision and the

newer and better types of books are thus introduced into the village and farm home. The result can usually be seen in improved community leadership.

Indiana has 150 libraries in towns of less than 5,000 people and in the smaller centers. Only nine towns of 2,000 or more population are without a library. Two-thirds of the inhabitants of the state have library facilities. Thirteen libraries each serve an entire county, as the one in Jennings just described. One hundred and fifty town libraries serve 190 townships under the State law which encourages joint support and coöperation on the part of country districts and municipalities. In the entire state 1,611,000 city and town dwellers have libraries, but although there are as many more people in the country districts, only 395,000 of these have as yet been reached. Indiana is, nevertheless, a leader in library extension.

Iowa has 154 libraries in towns of less than 5,000 and already thirty libraries are extending their services to from one to six townships under the rural extension laws of the state. The State traveling libraries number 1,500, the large majority of these being in the rural communities. This means an average of about fifteen per county. The number of traveling libraries and local associations is increasing very rapidly. Michigan has 150 public libraries in town and country. There are no figures on extension, but the movement has started on a small scale. In Illinois, 128 of the 221 tax-supported libraries are in towns of less than 5,000 and in the rural districts. One county library has thirteen branches in the country districts. Ohio has seventy-five libraries in town and country, four counties in which rural extension work is being done, and four in which there is partial service. There are 1,449 traveling libraries constantly in use in the state. Wisconsin has 169 public libraries in town and country. Four city libraries do extension work throughout their respective counties. Twenty-eight other libraries do extension work in townships, and many others extend their service at least beyond the municipalities in which they are located. There are 1,200 traveling libraries.

Social and Recreational Organization

Twenty years ago, the people of Clay and of many other counties in the Middle West had formed few social organizations, at least as compared with present developments. Everybody was busy getting started or settled, or developing the farms. To-day no community in Clay County is without a social organization of some kind.

Every community has at least one lodge. Five of the twelve communities have open societies or clubs, and two communities have other social organizations. Twenty-two lodges have a total membership of 2,473, an average of 112. Ten open societies or clubs have an average membership of seventy-two. The six other organizations have on an average thirty-three members. Spencer, the county seat, is the only community which has a large number of social organizations, and the only one which has social or recreational organizations for the four groups of men, women, boys, and

Courtesy of Rural Sociology Section, Iowa State College of Agriculture.

WONDER WHAT MAKE THESE CARS ARE?

Boys' Club on an automobile "hike"

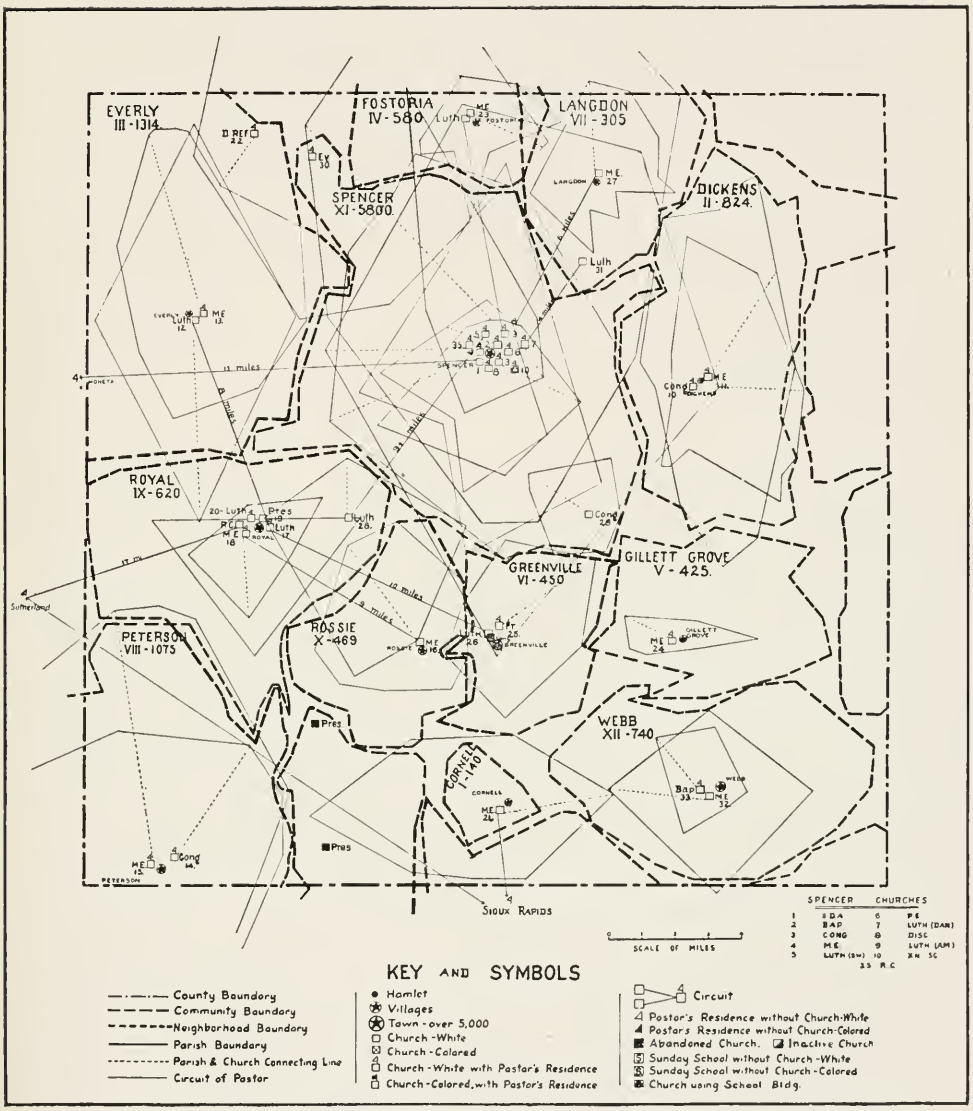
girls. Four of the communities are especially deficient, having social organizations for only one or two groups. A majority of the schools take some part in the supplying social events. Seven of the twelve communities have organized athletics in connection with schools or other organizations. Two communities have a total of three dance halls, two have moving-picture theaters and one—the county seat—has six pool-rooms and two bowling-alleys. The work of the schools and of the social organizations, including the lodges, perhaps overshadows the influence of commercial recreation. The part of the churches in recreational life is considered in Chapter III.

Jennings County also has made considerable progress in the way of recreation, but here, too, only one community, North Vernon,

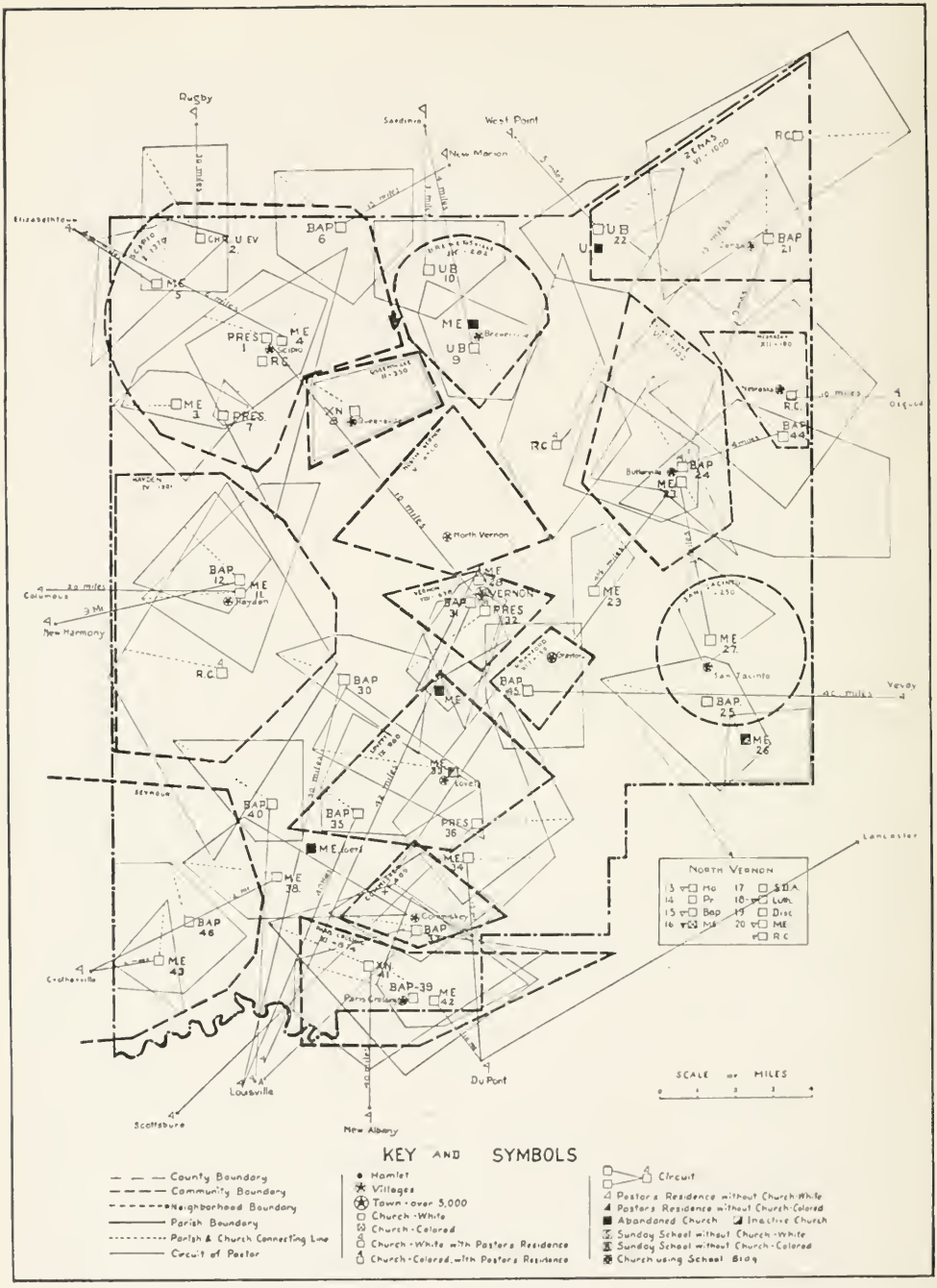
the commercial and railroad center, is supplying social and recreational events for all groups. Enterprising citizens have purchased a beautiful park site between Vernon and North Vernon, and have presented it to the state, which will make of it a large and popular pleasure ground.

All of the fourteen communities have at least one place for recreation, but in one case this is only a moving-picture hall, in two cases a lodge hall, and in another case only the school is used. The supply of dance-halls, pool-rooms and bowling-alleys is about the same as in Clay County. The schools are taking an active part. There are two Gleaners, one Grange and thirty-one lodges, three women's clubs, one boy scout troop, one county organization of War Mothers, one county post of the American Legion.

An examination of the surveys of twenty well distributed counties throughout the Middle West reveals on an average approximately the same amount of social and recreational organization. Only from one to three communities per county can be said to be fairly completely organized from a social and recreational point of view. On the other hand, practically every community has at least one social organization and one place for amusement.



CHURCH AND COMMUNITY MAP OF CLAY COUNTY, IOWA



CHURCH AND COMMUNITY MAP OF JENNINGS COUNTY, INDIANA

CHAPTER III

The Religion of the People

Standing of the Churches *

WHEN the churches of New England and the other eastern states saw the westward movement of population, they organized the Home Mission agencies, which brought church, school and college to the pioneer. Men and money came out of the East for this task of ministry, and many of the churches of Clay and Jennings Counties were first started with the aid of missionary funds.

In Clay County the first churches established were the Congregational, Baptist, Friends, Disciples and Methodist Episcopal, expressing the preferences of the earlier settlers who came from the East. The later immigration brought the Danish and Swedish Lutheran, and among the Germans the Lutheran and Evangelical Association. The single Dutch Reformed church ministers to a compact group of Dutch farmers in the northwestern part of the county. The only Protestant Episcopal and Seventh Day Adventist churches are at the County seat, while the one Presbyterian church has only lately been organized.

Regardless of erratic fluctuations of population during the last thirty years the ratio of Protestant church membership to total population has remained constant at one church member to every four inhabitants. According to the survey of 1920, 27 per cent of the people were members of the Protestant churches, and a little less than 3 per cent were Roman Catholics. In Jennings County there has been a decrease in population and in Protestant church membership since 1906, but with no change in the proportion of people in the churches. There were thirty-three organized Protestant churches in Clay County, and forty-three Protestant churches and six Roman Catholic churches in Jennings County in 1920.

The Church has a stronger footing in Clay County than in most sections of the Middle West. In many sections the gains of membership have been at a lower rate than the gains of population, while a decline of population often brings with it a still more rapid

* The charts in this chapter refer to Clay County only.

decline of church membership. In 1920 thirty-five counties studied had 18 per cent of their population as active members in Protestant churches, whereas in Clay County, as has been seen, the proportion of church members was 27 per cent. The average church in Clay

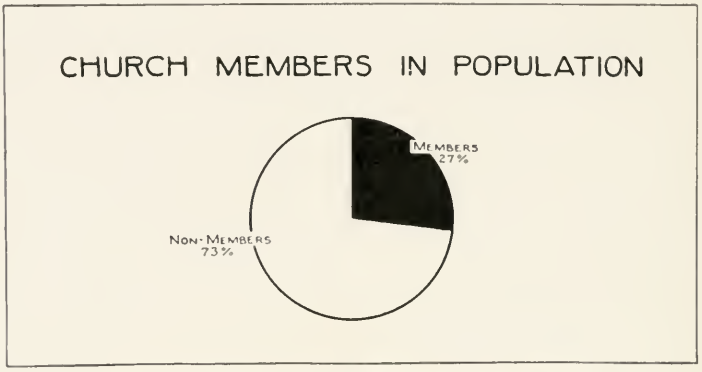


CHART I

ONE OF THE SIX ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES IN JENNINGS COUNTY

County has 135 members and in Jennings County eighty-seven, as compared with an average membership of ninety-three for the thirty-five specimen counties in this region. One-third of the churches

in Clay County and nearly half the churches in Jennings have less than fifty members. In this respect Jennings tallies almost exactly with the average for the thirty-five counties of the Middle West in which 47 per cent of the churches have less than fifty members, while the churches of Clay County are considerably larger.

The churches gain mainly by enlisting Sunday school scholars, through protracted meetings and through classes to prepare for

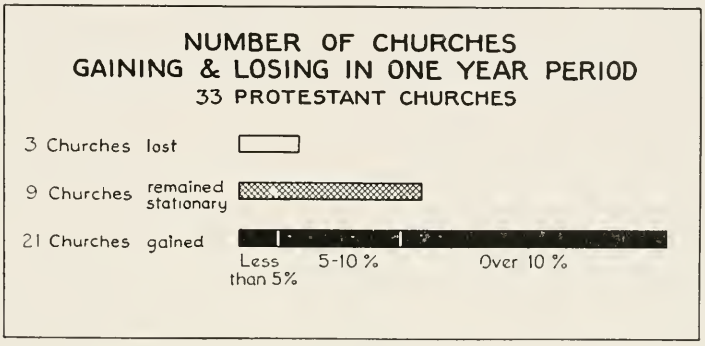


CHART II

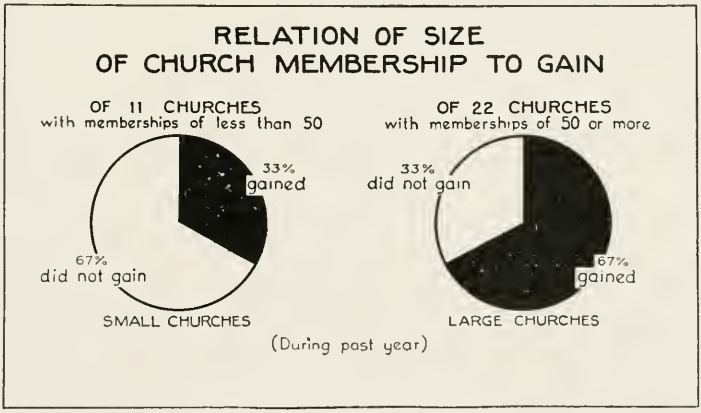


CHART III

church membership. In Clay County there had been a net gain of more than 9 per cent during the year previous to the survey. Only 9 per cent of the thirty-three churches are losing, 29 per cent are stationary, while 62 per cent are adding members. Most of the gains are in the larger churches with a membership of more than fifty, in fact, the thirteen churches which had an average membership of 141 in 1919, and which recorded a net gain of more than

10 per cent, accounted for 79 per cent of the net gain of the county. Seven of these churches had full-time resident pastors. Ten churches of the total of thirty-three held protracted meetings, adding an average of twenty-three to the church through conversions. The nine churches with classes to prepare for church membership are also adding rapidly to their numbers, having taken in an average of twenty-eight members a year. Three-fifths of the people joining the churches are Sunday school scholars.

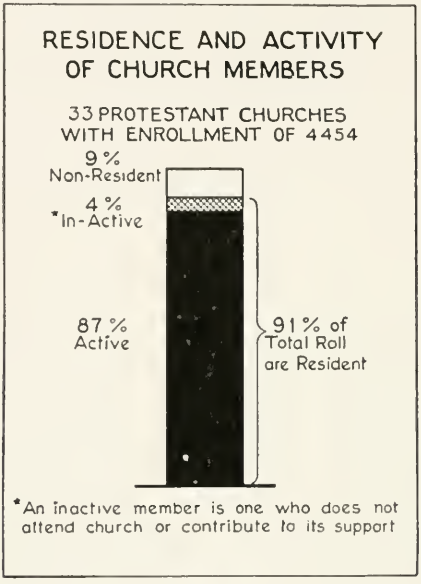


CHART IV

Three kinds of losses too often nullify the gains of the churches. In Clay County 9 per cent of the church membership is non-resident, made up of people who have left the community. Many of these people are, or become, a loss to the Church. There is no aggressive effort on the part of the local churches or overhead denominational organizations to halt this loss. Too often the country church selfishly holds to the non-resident member for the sake of what contribution it may get. Six per cent of the membership is resident but inactive, neither attending nor contributing. This is only a camouflaged form of loss. It means little to add a member, if another is lost through inactivity. True evangelism or enlistment begins by "holding on to what you have," by putting the membership at work. A third form of loss is through failure to enlist

young people. Seventy per cent of the church membership of Clay County consists of persons over twenty-one years of age. In Jennings County 22 per cent of the church members are non-resident, which is partly explained by the exodus of the people from the county. Six per cent are resident but do not contribute or attend.

The churches reach the families of farm owners, retired farmers and traders in town and village, far more effectively than they reach the households of farm-tenants. In Clay County tenants make up 51.5 per cent of the operating farmers in the county, but only 21.1 per cent of those on the church rolls. The shifting of the tenant makes him and his family hard to reach in a new county like Clay, but an even more serious difficulty is the fact that the minister shifts more frequently than the farm tenant.

In both counties churches may be said to be very unevenly distributed. Congregations were first established in a scramble to get to points of importance, or to places which promised to grow, in order that the denomination might rapidly add members and finance. Ralph Felton, in his Indiana Survey of 1911, describes the typical situation in the Middle West: "Some churches were built purely out of jealousy. Most of them were built without regard for other denominations. Some one blundered. The Lord's money was wasted. The process is still going on." In Clay County there is one church for every 474 people. This is close to the average figure for thirty-five surveyed counties in the region, one church to every 509 persons. Fortunately four of the smaller communities have only one church. Eliminating these, the ratio of people per church in the eight communities with more than one church is as follows: one church to 412 people; one to 438; one to 225; one to 152; one to 538; one to 122; one to 526; one to 375. According to the standard recommended by the interdenominational organizations, one to 1,000 people, it is obvious that each one of these communities is overchurched. In Jennings County the proportion of churches to people is one to 310, and the local communities are more badly overchurched than in Clay. In Clay County, with its group of churches serving German, Swedish and Danish immigrants, the situation is somewhat explained by the alignments by racial preference. The church of the immigrant stands side by side with that of the early settler in half the communities. Racial barriers will for some time keep the gap between denominations wide. The situation in Jennings County, worse than that of Clay, cannot be explained on these grounds. Here it is a case of pure denominational rivalry.

The churches receive good financial support from the people of Clay County. Active members give an average of $22.82 per year for all causes. In this respect Clay County stands tenth highest among twenty-six specimen counties in the nation. Systematic finance, along with a greater amount of pastoral attention, yields much better results than the slovenly, outworn methods. Those churches which use a budget system for all money raised and make an every member canvass of their members raise almost twice as much per active member as those who use old fashioned methods or no methods at all.

In Jennings County the results of systematic finance are prac-

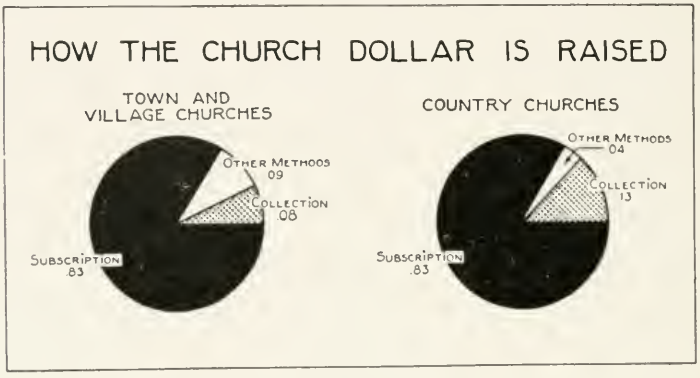


CHART V

tically the same, although per capita giving is only one-third as high as in Clay County. In Clay County eighty-four cents out of a typical church dollar are raised by subscription, in Jennings County seventy-two cents. Thirty-four per cent of all money disbursed by local church treasurers in Clay County goes for pastors' salaries. This proportion varies from 21 per cent in the town to 36 per cent in the village and 44 per cent in the country churches. The proportion for all benevolences is 36 per cent, varying from 31 per cent in the country to 35 per cent in the village and 43 per cent in the town churches. Other expenses comprise 30 per cent of the total, these being highest in the town churches. In Jennings County 53 per cent of the disbursements are for pastoral support, 26 per cent for missions and benevolences, and 21 per cent for all other causes. Proportions vary among the three groups very much as in Clay County. These figures do not include the finances of the Sunday schools or of the other organizations within the Church.

Only three of the thirty-three Iowa churches receive Home Mission aid. One is the only church in the community, and has a resident full-time pastor. In another community the aided church is one of two and both congregations have non-resident ministers. Race barriers are keeping these churches apart. A third church is the only one in the community. One of the forty-three Indiana churches receives Home Mission aid. This is located in North Vernon, where there are eight Protestant and one Roman Catholic churches, for a population of 3,500 in town and 1200 on the farms in the immediate vicinity. The church has a pastor who serves

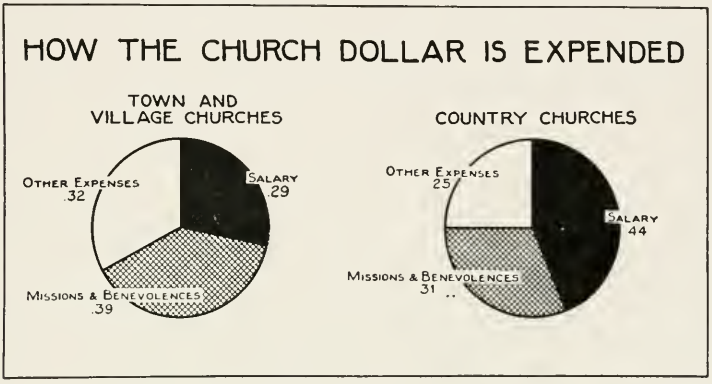


CHART VI

another point. It is one of the smallest churches in the community and has received $200 during the past year and $1,900 during the last four years. Home Mission money thus appropriated is misappropriated.

In Clay County more than one-third of the church buildings have but one room, in Jennings three-fourths are of this traditional type. They are hold-overs from the day in which the Church stressed preaching and the individualistic gospel. All but four buildings in Clay and slightly less than half of those in Jennings are wooden buildings. Clay's churches are mostly the original structures, while first buildings in Jennings have been largely replaced, but again only by one-room structures. The one-room school building is a disgrace except when abandoned. What of the one-room churches? In Clay new and larger buildings are slowly being erected. Only the county seat of Clay can be said to have modern, well-equipped buildings with provision for social and recreational affairs, and only some of the churches of North Vernon in Jennings

County may be put into such a class. Thus only one community in each county has modern church buildings. In Clay County eleven of the twelve communities, and twenty-three of the thirty-three churches have parsonages; in Jennings only three of the fourteen communities and four of the forty-one churches are thus equipped to house a pastor.

The average value of church buildings in Clay County is $5,732. The averages vary from $10,133 for the town, $4,913 in the village,

NO ROOM EXCEPT FOR PREACHING

The M. E. Church at Hayden, Jennings County

to $3,183 in the country churches. In Jennings County the average building is worth $3,800—that of the town churches being $14,800, the village churches $3,750, and the country churches $1,913.

The Church in the Community

The preceding section has dealt with the churches in the past, how well they are established, what the people have given them in money and support. This section will deal with the contribution of the churches to the people, their methods of ministry, their programs of service.

The first requisite of the Church is regular and frequent service. In Clay County twenty-nine of the thirty-three churches have four

or more monthly services. Jennings County has only twenty out of the forty-one churches with this number of meetings. Half of them have only two services. Only five churches in Jennings and nine in Clay join in union services.

Though the churches have done little to become permanent and increase their membership during the last few decades, nevertheless their programs, if meager, are a real contribution to community life. Twenty-three of Clay County's churches are carrying on a general program. Six churches carry on some form of *special*

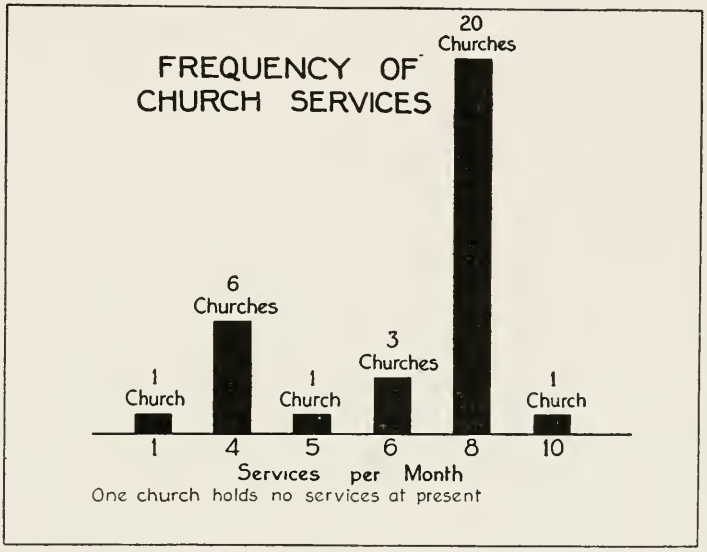


CHART VII

missionary service, such as the support of a particular worker in some foreign field. Ten churches participate in local charitable work as needed. One church is definitely furthering some agricultural work. Six churches are engaged in some form of social or recreational activity, apart from those of specific church organizations. Four town churches only carry on educational work outside the Sunday school. Six town churches have an interest in the cultural improvement of their community. Six churches strive to do some special work among young people, and nineteen churches celebrate festivals, national holidays, anniversaries, etc. Two-thirds of the churches at least carry on one of the above activities. The same is true of those of Jennings County.

The matter of church program in Clay County may be briefly

expressed by communities. One community has churches with a "good" or "very good" program; in three communities the program of the church is "fair"; in four it is negligible; and in the remaining four there is no church engaging in any of the activities enumerated above. Jennings' fourteen communities may thus be classified with respect to their church program: one good, one fair, six negligible, while the remaining six have no general church program.

Of importance in this connection is the work of the Sunday schools and other organizations within the churches. The religious leaders of Clay County have endeavored to increase the interest of all church Sunday schools in better methods of religious education. A two-day county conference was held, at which national denominational officers were present. The program was superior to that of the average county Sunday school convention, a tribute to the leadership assumed by Clay County. It has been noted already that the Sunday schools are the principal "feeders" of the churches. All but one of the churches conduct a Bible school. The county enrollment equals only 76 per cent of the church membership. The school program is evident from the following: Seven schools in three communities conduct systematic mission study; three-fourths of the churches, however, do nothing, in the way of systematic missionary instruction. Fifteen persons have gone into employed Christian service during the past ten years. Only one town school is training its teachers. The county seat alone has organized departments. In only two communities are there schools that provide social and recreational events. A study of twenty specimen counties in the Middle West shows that Clay County is slightly above the average in regard to religious education. All but one of the forty-three churches in Jennings County conduct Sunday schools. They are not nearly so well organized as those of Clay, and their program is very meager.

The other organizations play a considerable part in the Church's program, but the churches have not begun to organize all age and sex groups. Only one church out of thirty-three in Clay County has organizations for men, women, boys and girls, outside of the Sunday school. For men there are only two brotherhoods with a total of eighty members—both in the county seat. For women there are thirty-four organizations with 1,481 members, at least one in every community. Twenty-four are Ladies' Aids, nine Missionary Societies, one a Sewing Circle. There are two Boy Scout troops with thirty members, and four girls' groups with ninety-eight members, including two Camp Fire Councils. The twenty-six mixed

organizations include nineteen for young people—Christian Endeavor Societies, Epworth Leagues, Luther Leagues, etc., with 513 members, and seven for children, with 182 members. These are so distributed as to give one to each community. The churches of Jennings County have only one men's club with forty members, and none for boys or girls. There are thirty-one of the usual organizations for women with 690 members in the forty-three churches, one at least in every community. The ten Young People's Societies

A PICTURESQUE BUILDING

Dutch Reformed Church North of Everly, Clay County.

have 440 members, while the three mixed organizations have ninety.

In appraising the value of the Church's community program a comparison with social organizations of the communities was made. Clay County has thirty-six social organizations with 3,395 members, including twenty-two lodges, and sixty-six church organizations with a constituency of 2,439, with which are grouped a large number of women's and young people's societies. The churches have the young people and women to a greater extent than the community organizations, but they lag, as does the community, in reaching boys and girls. But the churches especially fail in enlisting men. Jennings County has fifty-seven church organizations with a constituency of 1,297, and forty community organizations having 2,559 members, and with about the same distribution of service as in Clay. The

average community organization in Clay County has ninety-four members, that within the church thirty-nine. In Jennings, there is the same variation. The church organizations are small and numerous, compared to those in the community.

Pastoral Leadership

"He did it," says the leading layman in a very successful country church, pointing to his pastor. Those three words should

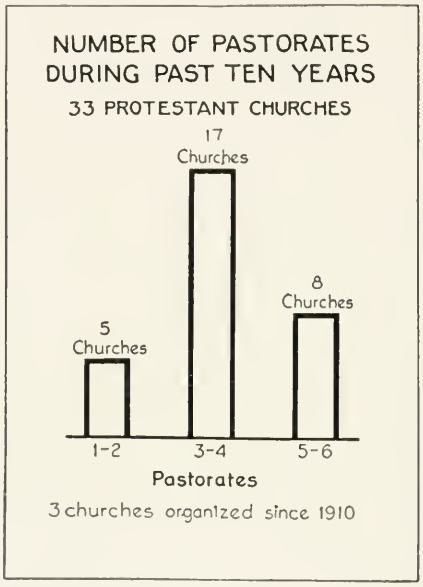


CHART VIII

be said of the pastor of every successful country church in America, because in the right kind of pastoral leadership is the key to the whole country church problem.

For the present discussion there are two outstanding points of importance. First, the churches are handicapped by migratory ministers. In Clay County only three churches out of thirty-three have had their present pastors for eight years. The average pastorate is slightly less than three years in length. Even this condition is better than that of Jennings County, where the average minister stays in his charge only two years. Though the farm tenant is thought to be a handicap to the Church because of his frequent

shifting, nevertheless he stays on his farm an average of six and three-tenths years, according to Interchurch Farm Tenantry surveys of 556 specimen farms in Illinois, Indiana and Missouri. The average term of pastoral service in twenty specimen mid-western counties is almost three years. The Church cannot complain of the tenant's shifting when it maintains a ministry which is migratory.

The second important point is the inexperience of the average minister in local church administration. This applies especially to

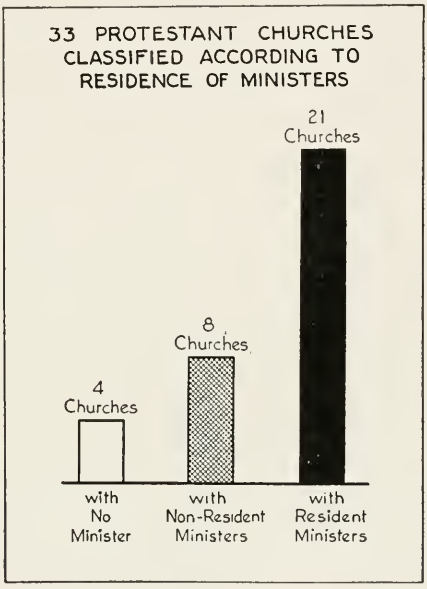


CHART IX

the untrained minister, but also to many of those who have had special training. Throughout the Middle West only 37 per cent of the town and country ministers are college and seminary graduates. But many of the college and seminary men are not rural church engineers. They are not church leaders or administrators or community leaders. There are fortunately some exceptions, but these only emphasize the dearth. "We know that the country church is sick, very sick, but give us enough money and the right kind of men, and we will solve the problems," says the rural secretary of the home mission board of a large denomination. There are some who lay the entire blame for our present weakness in the country

churches on the inefficient pastoral leadership so apparent everywhere. In college and seminary the ministerial student is educated away from the country. Most of the theologs in the large modern theological seminaries hope even to avoid the country church stage, and expect to start their careers in a city pulpit as city pastor, or as assistant. The lack of real church and community leaders in the town and country pulpit explains very much of the country church's deficiencies to-day—her lack of a strong foothold in the community and of a broad and vigorous program.

The full situation in regard to the supply of ministers, salaries and training, etc., may be gleaned from the following statements. Twenty-four pastors serve twenty-nine of Clay County's churches. Four congregations were temporarily pastorless at the time of the

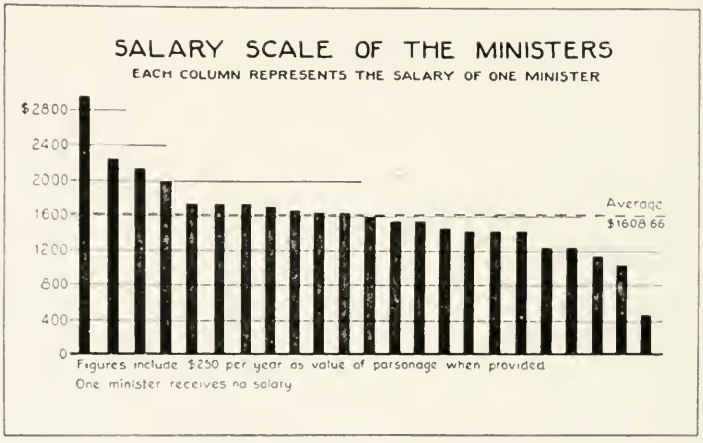


CHART X

survey. Twenty-one of the twenty-nine churches have resident pastors. Of these sixteen, or two-thirds, are "full-time"—serve only one church and follow no other occupation. This is a very high proportion, compared to the thirty-five mid-western counties in which only 21 per cent of the churches have full-time resident pastors. In the country there is less pastoral leadership than in the village or town churches. The thirteen country churches have only five resident ministers. In terms of communities, four out of twelve have no minister within their bounds, one has only one part-time pastor, while seven, or more than 58 per cent, have full-time ministers. For the thirty-five counties of the region, only 39 per cent of the communities have full-time resident pastors. One

pastor of the twenty-four in Clay County is also a farmer. In the region nearly one out of ten ministers follows another occupation. All but one pastor have free parsonages.

The average yearly salary for ministers is $1,608.66, this figure including the sum of $250, added arbitrarily to each salary of a pastor with free parsonage privileges. The lowest salary, $467.25, is paid to the pastor who also farms, while the highest amount, $2,950, is received by a county seat minister. Nine pastors have had col-

A GOOD TYPE OF PARSONAGE IN CLAY COUNTY

lege and seminary training; three have had college training only and four seminary or Bible school only, while eight report no special training for the ministry. Eighteen of the twenty-four ministers personally own automobiles.

In Jennings County there is much less pastoral leadership. This is a particular weakness. Usually church prosperity depends upon at least a good supply of resident pastors. Only one community of fourteen has a full-time resident minister; two communities have part-time pastors, while the eleven remaining have none living within their bounds. Only eight of the twenty-three pastors have free parsonages. Twelve of the twenty-three pastors follow other occupations to earn a living. The average salary is only $919 a

year, this figure also including $250 as the estimated cash value of parsonages for the pastors thus provided. In Tippecanoe County, Indiana, in the west central part of the State and a much more prosperous section, the average salary of ministers is $1,344.

Church Parish and Community Boundary

It is a very conservative statement that not more than three or four of the country pastors or congregations of Clay or Jennings Counties, and not more than 8 or 10 per cent of the pastors in the Middle West, have ever paid any systematic attention to the boundaries or areas of their parishes.*

The church members are grouped as they are by chance or by physical circumstance, such as the condition of roads or the lay of the land. In a few cases, the church parish is larger in area than the community boundary. But many of these parishes are large because of a few scattered families living on the extremes of the parish areas. Few churches have compact parishes, or have tried to have them. The ordinary church parish is not coterminous with the community of which the church is a part. The Church, however, has never known its community, and therefore has never ministered to the entire area, not to mention all ages and groups in the community. The Interchurch survey was the first to make any study of the rural church parish, and this took into account only areas. Even this investigation reveals the great lack of knowledge on the part of the average local church and its pastor in regard to the systematic mapping of his field in its relation to the community. Just a glance at the map reveals much overlapping of parish boundaries, even in some of the small communities, and on the other hand, some sections of the counties where the churches claim no members at all. These maps illustrate the haphazard way in which the country church plans or neglects to reach the community. Ignorance of community boundaries is, of course, not the only factor. In Clay County, as has been pointed out in the section under distribution of churches, six communities have denominational divisions on account of racial preference. The church made up of Danish immigrants and their descendants reaches them very well, and its parish contains only that part of the community in which its constituency lives. But in the other half of the communities,

* See the maps on pages 45 and 46 on which this discussion is based. The church parishes are shown in heavy solid lines and the community boundaries in heavy broken lines.

THE CHURCH HOME OF PROSPEROUS IMMIGRANTS

Danish Lutheran Church and Parsonage
at Royal, Clay County

where there is no racial factor, there is no such easy explanation. Lack of a resident pastor often means a small parish. And denominational rivalry in the village keeps pastors from branching out into the entire community. In Jennings County, where there are no racial barriers between Protestant churches, the limitation is due to lack of vision and inadequate leaders of power and personality.

Of especial concern in Clay County, and all others in which the farmer has begun to attend the village and town church, are the church parishes at the trade center. Usually the American village, which begins its life as a service station for people on farms, and which always depends on the trade of the operating farmers, becomes exclusive and snobbish. It is made up of tradesmen and retired farmers, and in some cases there is also a small manufacturing element. In the ordinary trade area there is a lack of democracy and the farmer is not much at home in the village. He comes to buy and sell, to see the movies and perhaps to dance, but he is on the whole apart from the social life of the village. The village church does not draw a high proportion of the farmers. But membership figures of Clay County will give some idea of the concentration of church life in town and villages.

The country churches have, to begin with, less pastoral attention, as has been noted in the section on pastoral leadership. Some village and town pastors, who serve country churches in addition to those at the trade center, are constantly trying to induce farmers to drive to town to church. The popularity of the automobile helps to make this possible. An examination of the figures shows that the town and village churches reach 443 farm families in the county, while the country churches have on their rolls only 207. While the country churches have 184 operating farmers as members, those in village and town have 361, again twice the total of the country churches. The town and village churches each reach about equal numbers of farmers, demonstrating that the county-seat churches are reaching operating farmers from the surrounding community.

Already eight of the twelve communities of the county have only churches at their trade center—hamlet, village or town. Considering only the four communities which have country churches in competition with those of town or village, it appears that those at the trade centers have three times as many operating farmers on the roll as the country churches, and reach slightly over four times as many farm families. Further, 75 per cent of the churches at the center are growing, while only 40 per cent of those in the country have made a net gain during the past ten years. A study of the

country churches reveals that 40 per cent of those in competition with churches in village or town have made a gain, while 60 per cent of those which are the only churches in the community have grown during the past ten years. The same tendency occurs in some other sections. In a county in Kansas, 807 farmers are enrolled on the books of the village churches which have a total of 3,159 members. In a number of Ohio counties an average of twelve country churches have been abandoned in the past few years, while the town and village churches are most prosperous.

Churches of Distinction

Perhaps one town and country church out of fifty is an outstanding success. It has achieved such results in the community under such efficient pastoral leadership, that its story should be known and provide an example. Usually in the Middle West, the county-seat town has the strongest churches. Attention may well be called to some of the work being done in Spencer, the county seat of Clay County, Iowa. One of the big problems is always that of the young people, and especially during the past few years is this matter coming to the fore. One county-seat pastor says of his work among young people: "The church must supply them with amusements. What kind will largely depend upon the means and equipment of the church. Basketball and other indoor games should be promoted in winter time. We have socials for the young people and games in our basement. One Sunday afternoon we had a five o'clock social, served refreshments, then played games and went to the evening church meetings."

Or one may take the work of the Methodist Episcopal church which is made possible by its excellent equipment and resources. The church houses its boys' club in a separate building. There are a swimming pool, gymnasium, extra rooms for educational work, and best of all a full time director to supervise the activities of the plant. Out of 740 resident members 283 are young people under twenty-one. With the rooms in the gymnasium and those in the church building it is possible for this church to have thirty Sunday school classes and really grade its instruction. There are nine other organizations within the church, reaching all age and sex groups. During the year previous to the survey there was a net gain of forty-nine members, eighteen of whom were young people under twenty-one years of age. There are classes for all young people over eight years of age in gymnastics and swimming.

There are "hikes" for the boys, girls and young people. A study class in evangelism is attended by the leaders of the church. The church increases interest in missions by responsibility for special work of its own: it supports a foreign missionary on full time, twelve native workers in foreign fields, two students in the Home Mission fields in America, and gives partial support to a teacher in Mexico, and to several other teachers and home missionaries. The Sunday school and Epworth leagues have produced several pageants. A deaconess is employed on full time for local work, and she concentrates upon ministry to girls and young women of the parish and community. The pastor has an automobile to aid him in his pastoral work. And with all of this work done the pastor says: "We should have lyceum courses and summer Chautauquas, also more literature and musical programs. The church should get aside at least $200 to finance a Chautauqua for the young people of the community."

"This church is a community asset! This church has something real and priceless to contribute to the community," preached the pastor of the Methodist Episcopal church when he went to North Vernon, Jennings County, Indiana, four years ago. "It is here to give of itself and to serve—and no one should miss what it can give." That remark was made in a church which was little respected by its community. Moreover, the minister could not have come under less promising circumstances. A tornado had hit the town and the church four months before. When he went to inspect the building in which he was to preach, he found at least a ton of brick on the front steps, the windows were covered with rough boards, and no service had been held for months. But he outlined his work carefully and set out to demonstrate what he was preaching.

He challenged the men of the church and community, organized a club, and set before them definite pieces of service, among them a systematic ministry to the poor of the community. Instead of letting the poor go along until some great need developed, and then taking a collection, the pastor proposed a fund which should be distributed in a business-like way. The men took to it. In cash during the past year $125 was wisely distributed, in addition to many other much more valuable gifts in "kind." The men have banquets, and other social times.

The women became so numerous in their society that now they must have six divisions. Every woman in the church belongs to the Women's Society which takes an active part in social and missionary affairs. Four years ago the Sunday school had 125

members. This was reorganized. Pastors, teachers and officers began to convince others that they were there to serve and gradually more came in. The membership has increased 100 per cent in the last four years. Its attendance on special occasions runs to 325. The Epworth League now numbers ninety, but it is such a live organization that it draws many more than its own members to every meeting. The average attendance is 110. It emphasizes

WHAT THE RIGHT PASTOR CAN DO

The M. E. Church at North Vernon, Jennings County, whose pastor found it four years ago in ruins and unrespected and has made it, as he promised he would, "a community asset"

missionary service, and every two months holds a special meeting when pageants are presented and other programs given.

The young men and women are well organized through the Sunday school classes. One young women's class numbers forty-five. The pastor himself is "strong for" giving the young folks opportunity, constant service, as well as a "good time." When he was a boy, living forty miles from a railroad in Kentucky, he asked a teacher in the community to conduct evening classes in the church, since that was the most convenient place. The teacher agreed to do it, provided they could first secure the use of the building. They went to the trustees and elders, who decided that their church must be used only to worship God. That drove the

young petitioner from the church. For eleven years he never went near one. But the old experience hung over him. The elders and trustees in the old home church must have been wrong. The church could do better than that. There was only one way to prove it—to go into the ministry himself. Finally, after a long struggle, he worked his way through college and theological seminary. Now he is striving to use all the resources of the church to minister to the young people in just as many ways as possible. The improvements that have been made in the church building have all been to provide more room for social affairs, and to make the Sunday school more efficient. Seven thousand dollars have been spent on improving the building in the past few years, and all of it has been raised as needed.

"This church is a community asset," preaches the pastor. And because of his works the people believe him, come to the church and find it so.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusions and Recommendations

What the Church Can Do

THE churches for the most part have stood aloof during the period of coöperative, economic development. Only a small proportion of the pastors have given encouragement or assistance. Should this be so? Or has the Church a stake in a movement like the coöperative which promises to make rural economic life more democratic? The tendency to build up one man, one vote organizations, with distribution of profits according to the extent to which the individual uses the organization rather than by the amount of money invested, is surely one of the promising signs on the horizon to-day. The coöperative will more efficiently distribute the farmers' supplies and products, will add to their income, and will give them more economic and political power. It may not be an overstatement to say that the coöperative is the "greatest thing" in rural life in the Middle West to-day. To make it a powerful force in building a better social order, is the task before the rural social engineer. To make it an organization which will aid in the building of a better community; to get it to look outward at least as much as inward; to give it vision beyond mere class or group; to give it real community spirit, a desire to be an agency for service as well as an agency for the saving of money in costs of distribution—this is a worthy task for the rural religious leader. There is for the local church a middle path between indifference and actual participation. Some progressive ministers take a membership in the farm bureau. Why not the local church? No institution is more sensitive to economic cycles than the Church. It should support the agency working for abiding prosperity.

The harmful effects of land speculation, increasing tenancy, and attendant problems, emphasize the fact that the Church should have some share in their solution. It can and should say a word, or more than a word, to help. It is a fact, for instance, that it is poor economics for the farm tenant to use the labor of his wife and children to aid in the advance to ownership. The man who studies

scientific agriculture and applies his knowledge, can get to ownership more quickly than the man who follows the precedent of using the constant labor of his family. The Church may well preach facts like that. The Church should declare for a longer lease for the tenant, for crop rent over against cash rent. It should assist in getting long-term credit for those farmers who now need it most or deserve it, so that as many as possible will survive the present depression with at least a home and a farm to work. As it now is, they contracted large debts when money was cheap, and must pay from slender profits when money is dear.

For a most valuable lesson the churches should study school consolidation. In this respect the rural school and its leaders are far ahead of the country church and its administrators. The school leaders are endeavoring to build up few and strong institutions at the trade centers that will employ fewer teachers and yet have an abler staff. The consolidated school gives greater opportunity to the rural child. The trained superintendent can get closer to the pupils. Instead of having a large number of small ungraded schools scattered over the trade area, one efficient school center is rapidly taking their places. The lessons of efficiency are being learned in the schools. How long before the rural church will begin to move in this direction? The movement for consolidation in the schools will, however, serve as an object lesson to young and old in the churches in the Middle West. They should now plan to eliminate the large number of extra churches which are not worth what they cost. This weeding-out process cannot begin too soon. Many churches deserve extinction. They are sectarian in spirit, lack community vision and exist for the worship of a mere handful of individuals. In getting rid of the extra churches local desires should be consulted. If the community wants a federated church, then let it have all assistance possible from the respective denominations. If an undenominational community church is desired, then let it be tried, at least. If all but one denominational church should withdraw, and this one be made responsible for a certain program in the field, then all the forces which have to do with rural church administration should help in such a readjustment. Usually trading of local churches can be accomplished with benefit to the communities and the denominations concerned.

One need hardly emphasize the importance of encouraging the forces which are making for prevention of disease. It is better to prevent sickness and blindness than to heal the sick or give sight

to the blind. The religious forces are prominent in the four communities of Clay county which are supporting the public health nurse. No doubt the local religious forces are usually ready to coöperate in such work. But there is great need for expansion. Every county in the Middle West should have at least one public health nurse. The churches should encourage such public health service, and participate in the Red Cross program for rural nursing, etc.

Library extension is another social and educative factor. Library

AN EXAMPLE OF A ONE-ROOM CHURCH BUILDING
The Baptist Church at Commiskey, Jennings County

extension is service given by the city, town or village institution to the surrounding countryside through branch libraries in the smaller centers, or the distribution of books by auto or wagon. The libraries have already done much better than the churches in organizing their service in centers, and in carrying their goods to the people. The churches may utilize these extension methods in gospel propaganda and in serving a scattered community.

The organization of social and recreational life has much religious significance. The Church has lagged here, as in coöperation with other agencies. It is a religious duty to supply the means of social and recreational development just as much as spiritual de-

velopment. In communities which lack social and recreational organizations for all age and sex groups—and most communities lack them for from one to three groups—the Church or the local churches coöperatively should organize women's clubs, boy and girl scout troops, civic organizations, community clubs, etc. Where there is only one church this should so expand its program as to have some of these organizations and activities as part of the work of the local church. In this way the church can better serve the people and identify itself with community life.

The chief concern of the local churches should be an efficient pastoral service. If there were enough men of the right kind in the country pulpit, the sickness of the country church would soon be cured. Especially do we need able local church administrators. Local church administration is especially difficult in Protestantism. The causes are twofold: because ministers have no practical training, and because the inexperienced laymen, to whom church business is a side issue, usually control the church organization. Such a local church organization is desirable, but in order to function it must be entrusted to trained and experienced leaders. Rural communities want evangelists with a constructive, aggressive program and likewise versed in the financial problems that may confront the local church. They must be equal to dealing with problems of local church distribution, courageous enough to leave the field that there may be a federated church, willing to recommend that their own denomination withdraw for the sake of one efficient church and that the Kingdom of God may be hastened. As executives they should inaugurate a virile, comprehensive program of missionary and community service, and create a plant with adequate buildings to concrete their vision. Men of this type cannot fail to utilize for the church every social and educational agency with statesmanlike tact and understanding. Only Christian personality and leadership will solve the problems of religious education, program, and equipment in the country church. There is great need for giving training to all men entering the ministry, for instruction to untrained pastors on the field and special post-graduate schools for men who have had college and seminary work.

The problem of church membership concerns methods of growth and enlistment. The only gain in church membership in Clay County, compared with the total population, was recorded within the past four years. In Jennings County church membership and population have been steadily declining for the past twenty years. As a remedy the Sunday schools, already the principal feeders

of the churches, should be strengthened. The better kind of religious education conferences, one of which Clay has already held, will be more frequent. Numbers of efficient teachers should be trained. The Sunday school, besides providing religious instruction, should take a more active part in the social and recreational life of the people. There should be classes to prepare for church membership in every church or Sunday school. Already steady recruiting and gains have been traced to such classes. What needs to be stressed in evangelistic methods is a more current program. The protracted meetings may be held if desired, and the Church must never lose sight of the fact that real evangelism is necessary, that gains by confession of faith are the more substantial. But the most effective evangelism begins by holding on to what you have. Inactive members and non-residents are some of the worst kinds of losses. To make the church program wide and attractive, to put the membership to work so far as possible, is the duty of every evangelistic program. Any high proportion of non-resident members should be the concern of all denominational administrators. Many of the non-resident members of the rural church live in other rural communities, and should belong to the church where they live. There is to-day no efficient, courageous or unselfish follow up of the non-resident member.

Church parishes should be planned. House to house canvasses should be made, preferably by the local churches working coöperatively. Every home should be mapped, and the relation of every member to the church and its activities traced and recorded with the pastor who should study his community boundaries. A map of every county in the Middle West showing parish and community boundaries should be in the hands of every pastor, and all should use the maps. A canvass, plus a study of the community area and its relation to the parish area, will mean a great advance. Church parishes would no longer be haphazard. The church parish would extend to the community boundary at least, instead of covering only parts of it. Then there is a large problem surrounding the concentration of rural life in the village. It appears that the country church is losing ground and that the church of the future will be in the town and village trade center. But the village is apt to be somewhat snobbish. The consequence is that the farmers are usually the most ignored group in the community. It is necessary, therefore, that the village church begin to measure up to its possibilities. It must be instilled with a passion to serve the last person on the last farm in the community. Various denominations should

make demonstration parishes in communities with villages where there are no country churches or where they are disappearing. Pastors familiar with the problem should be placed in these charges. They will endeavor to serve the retired farmer, the trader, the industrial worker, if he exists, and the operating farmer. The village church must arrange its special services at hours to suit the farmers. It must saturate itself with sincere cordiality. It must become a service station in rural religious life like similar agencies in economic life. Just as the village sells the farmer his shoes so can it provide for him a religious center.

Most of all is the future of the country church bound up with the country ministry. The study of the successful churches helps to emphasize that fact. When the average country minister is more efficient; when he ceases to look upon the country church as a mere stepping stone to the city pulpit; when the various denominations professionalize the country ministry and train men to be rural social and religious engineers, then only will the Church gather power, widen and intensify her local program, and launch out to create that ideal community in which there will be one church serving all of the area and all of the groups. A community at one with the church parish is the goal.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Methodology and Definitions

The method used in the Town and Country Surveys of the Interchurch World Movement and the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys differs from the method of earlier surveys in this field chiefly in the following particulars:

1. "Rural" was defined as including all population living outside of incorporated places of over 5,000. Previous surveys usually excluded all places of 2,500 population or over, which follows the United States Census definition of "rural."

2. The local unit for the assembling of material was the community, regarded, usually, as the trade area of a town or village center. Previous surveys usually took the minor civil division as the local unit. The disadvantage of the community unit is that census and other statistical data are seldom available on that basis, thus increasing both the labor involved and the possibility of error. The great advantage is that it presents its results assembled on the basis of units which have real social significance, which the minor civil division seldom has. This advantage is considered as more than compensating for the disadvantage.

3. The actual service area of each church as indicated by the residences of its members and adherents was mapped and studied. This was an entirely new departure in rural surveys.

Four chief processes were involved in the actual field work of these surveys:

1. The determination of the community units and of any subsidiary neighborhood units included within them. The community boundaries were ascertained by noting the location of the last family, on each road leading out from a given center, who regularly traded at that center. These points, indicated on a map, were connected with each other by straight lines. The area about the given center thus enclosed was regarded as the community.

2. The study of the economic, social and institutional life of each community as thus defined.

3. The location of each church in the county, the determina-

tion of its parish area and the detailed study of its equipment, finance, membership, organization, program and leadership.

4. The preparation of a map showing in addition to the usual physical features, the boundaries of each community, the location, parish area and circuit connections of each church and the residence of each minister.

The following are the more important definitions used in the making of these surveys and the preparation of the reports:

GEOGRAPHICAL—

City—a center of over 5,000 population. Not included within the scope of these surveys except as specifically noted.

Town—a center with a population of from 2,501 to 5,000.

Village—a center with a population of from 251 to 2,500.

Hamlet—any clustered group of people not living on farms whose numbers do not exceed 250.

Open Country—the farming area, excluding hamlets and other centers.

Country—used in a three-fold division of population included in scope of survey into Town, Village and Country. Includes Hamlets and Open Country.

Town and Country—the whole area covered by these surveys, i. e., all population living outside of cities.

Rural—used interchangeably with Town and Country.

Community—that unit of territory and of population characterized by common social and economic interests and experiences; an "aggregation of people the majority of whose interests have a common center." Usually ascertained by determining the normal trade area of each given center. The primary social grouping of sufficient size and diversity of interests to be practically self-sufficing in ordinary affairs of business, civil and social life.

Neutral Territory—any area not definitely included within the area of one community. Usually an area between two or more centers, and somewhat influenced by each, but whose interests are so scattered that it cannot definitely be assigned to the sphere of influence of any one center.

Neighborhood—a recognizable social grouping having certain interests in common but dependent for certain elemental needs upon some adjacent center within the community area of which it is located.

Rural Industrial—pertaining to any industry other than farming within the Town and Country area.

APPENDIX I

POPULATION—

Foreigner—refers to foreign-born and native-born of foreign parentage.

New Americans—usually includes foreign-born and native-born of foreign or mixed parentage, but sometimes refers only to more recent immigration. In each case the exact meaning is clear from the context.

THE CHURCH—

Parish—the area within which the members and regular attendants of a given church live.

Circuit—two or more churches combined under the direction of one minister.

Resident Pastor—a church whose minister lives within its parish area is said to have a resident pastor.

Full-time Resident Pastor—a church with a resident pastor who serves no other church, and follows no other occupation than the ministry, is said to have a full-time resident pastor.

Part-time Pastor—a church whose minister either serves another church also, or devotes part of his time to some regular occupation other than the ministry, or both, is said to have a part-time minister.

Non-Resident Member—one carried on the rolls of a given church but living too far away to permit regular attendance; generally, any member living outside the community in which the church is located, unless he is a regular attendant.

Inactive Member—one who resides within the parish area of the church, but who neither attends its services nor contributes to its support.

Net Active Membership—the resultant membership of a given church after the number of non-resident and inactive members is deducted from the total on the church roll.

Per Capita Contributions or Expenditures—the total amount contributed or expended divided by the number of the *net active* membership.

Budget System—A church which, at the beginning of the fiscal year, makes an itemized forecast of the entire amount of money required for its maintenance during the year as a basis for a canvass of its membership for funds, is said to operate on a budget system with respect to its local finances. If amounts to be raised for denominational or other benevolences are included in the forecast and canvass, it is said to operate on a budget system for all moneys raised.

Adequate Financial System—Three chief elements are recognized in an adequate financial system: a budget system, an annual every-member canvass, and the use of envelopes for the weekly payment of subscriptions.

Receipts—Receipts have been divided under three heads:

a. Subscriptions, that is moneys received in payment of annual pledges.

b. Collections, that is money received from free-will offerings at public services.

c. All other sources of revenue, chiefly proceeds of entertainments and interest on endowments.

Salary of Minister—Inasmuch as some ministers receive in addition to their cash salary the free use of a house while others do not, a comparison of the cash salaries paid is misleading. In all salary comparisons, therefore, the cash value of a free parsonage is arbitrarily stated as $250 a year and that amount is added to the cash salary of each minister with free parsonage privileges. Thus an average salary stated as $1,450 is equivalent to $1,200 cash and the free use of a house.

APPENDIX II

Tables

(The tables are given in the order in which they are referred to in Chapter III.)

I

DATES OF ORGANIZATION OF CHURCHES

	Clay	*Jennings*
Oldest Church Organization	1869	1816
Newest Church Organization	1919	1915
Number organized prior to 1820	0	5
" " 1821-1840	0	8
" " 1841-1860	0	7
" " 1861-1880	6	11
" " 1881-1900	18	3
" " 1901-1920	7	6
Date unknown	2	3
Total	33	43

II

ANALYSIS OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP BY RESIDENCE AND ACTIVITY

	Clay	*Jennings*
Number of:		
Non-resident Members	374	818
Resident and Inactive	191	202
Resident and Active	3847	2702
Total Reported Membership	4412	3722

III

RESIDENT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP BY AGE AND SEX FOR ENTIRE COUNTY

	Clay	*Jennings*
Males over twenty-one	28%	29%
Males under twenty-one	13	11
Females over twenty-one	41	46
Females under twenty-one	18	14
	100%	100%

IV

GAIN AND LOSS OF CHURCHES
(One year period)

Churches showing:	*Clay*	*Jennings*
Net loss	3	15
Even break	9	8
Net gain less than 5%	2	2
Net gain 5% to 10%	6	4
Net gain over 10%	13	14
Totals	33	43

V

CHURCH GAIN IN RELATION TO SIZE OF MEMBERSHIP
(For one year period)

	Clay		*Jennings*	
	Number of Churches	*Number gaining*	*Number of Churches*	*Number gaining*
0 to 25	5	2	5	1
26 to 50	6	2	16	9
51 to 100	12	8	19	7
101 to 150	5	4	1	1
Over 150	5	5	2	2

VI

OCCUPATIONS OF CHURCH MEMBERS

	Clay	*Jennings*
Retired Farmers	168	179
Operating Farmers	430	607
Farm Renters	115	109
Farm Laborers	13	19
Business or Professional	237	107
All others	492	272
Totals	1455	1293

VII

FINANCIAL RECEIPTS OF CHURCHES

	Clay	*Jennings*
Total amount raised	$104,352.64	$20,915.01
Average per church	3,162.20	510.12
Amount per active member	22.82	7.98

APPENDIX II

VIII

FINANCIAL SYSTEM IN THE CHURCHES

	Clay	*Jennings*
Total number of churches	33	43
Number of churches with:		
Budget for all monies	12	10
Budget for all local expenses	10	11
Annual every-member canvass	19	19

IX

HOW THE CHURCH DOLLAR IS RAISED

	Clay	*Jennings*
Amount raised:		
By subscription	$.84	$.72
By collection	.09	.22
By all other methods	.07	.06
Totals	$1.00	$1.00

X

HOW THE CHURCH DOLLAR IS EXPENDED

	Clay	*Jennings*
Expended for:		
Salaries of ministers	$ .34	$ .53
Missions and benevolences	.36	.26
All other purposes	.30	.21
Totals	$1.00	$1.00

XI

CHURCH PROPERTY

Number, Kind and Value of Buildings used for Church Purposes

	Clay	*Jennings*
Church Buildings:		
Number	32	42
Total Value	$183,450	$152,000
Average Value	5,732	3,800
Parsonages:		
Number	23	4
Total Value	85,750	7,000
Average Value	3,728	1,750
Other Buildings:		
Number	1	0
Total Value	10,000	
Average Value		

XII

SUNDAY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE

	Number of Schools	Total Roll	Average per School	Attendance Total	Attendance Average per School	Attendance Per cent of roll
Clay	32	3366	105	2023	63	60
Jennings	42	3060	73	1573	37	52

XIII

SUNDAY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

	Clay	Jennings
Number of Sunday Schools	32	42
Number open all the year	30	36
Number of Schools with:		
Special Leadership Training	3	1
Organized Classes	13	12
Cradle Roll	12	13
Home Department	3	5
Teacher Training	1	3
Sunday School Papers	28	34
Library	5	4
Graded Lessons	17	10

XIV

NUMBER OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CHURCHES

	Clay		Jennings	
	Number	Members	Number	Members
Men's	2	80	1	40
Women's	34	1481	31	690
Boys'	2	30	0	0
Girls'	4	98	0	0
Mixed	26	695	13	530

XV

CLASSIFICATION OF CHURCHES ACCORDING TO RESIDENCE OF MINISTERS

	Clay	Jennings
Number of Churches having:		
Ministers resident in parish	21	6
Non-resident ministers	8	29
No minister	4	8

APPENDIX II

XVI

COMMUNITIES WITH RELATION TO RESIDENCE OF MINISTERS

	Clay	*Jennings*
Communities with:		
Full-time Resident Ministers	5	0
Part-time Resident Ministers	1	2
Full and Part-time Resident Ministers	2	1
No Resident Minister	4	11
Totals	12	14

XVII

VARIATION IN SALARIES PAID MINISTERS

Range of Salaries	*Clay*		*Jennings*	
	Pastors giving full time to ministry	*Pastors with other occupation*	*Pastors giving full time to ministry*	*Pastors with other occupation*
$ 500 or less	1	1	1	6
510 to $ 750	0	0	1	0
751 to 1,000	1	0	2	3
1,001 to 1,250	3	0	3	3
1,251 to 1,500	4	0	2	0
1,501 to 1,750	10	0	1	0
1,751 to 2,000	1	0	0	0
Over $2,000	3	0	0	0
Totals	23	1	10	12

Note: $250 allowed as salary value of free parsonage where furnished.

XVIII

RANGE OF SALARIES PAID MINISTERS

	Clay	*Jennings*
Maximum salary paid	$2,950.00	$1,850.00
Minimum salary paid	467.00	180.00
Average salary paid	1,608.00	919.00

APPENDIX III

Par Study of the Churches

One of the developments growing out of the Interchurch World Movement was the adoption of the so-called "Par Standard for Country Churches." This standard was worked out and approved by the Town and Country Committee of the Home Missions Council, and was submitted to a large group of the survey workers of the Interchurch World Movement representing every state in the Union. These persons had all done field survey work and were familiar with the varieties of conditions existing in America. It should also be stated that in addition to investigational experience these men had been country ministers and knew intimately the problems of the rural parish. There was unanimous agreement that this Par Standard should be placed before the country churches of America not as an ideal far beyond their accomplishment but as a goal which a church might in all reasonableness expect to attain. Since that time one denomination and the home mission department of a strong division of another, have adopted the Par Standard with slight adaptations for their own purposes.

It should be stated that no attempt has been made to give comparative value to the points in this Standard. So far as the table shows, a resident pastor on full-time counts as much as horse sheds or parking space. Obviously, this is a weakness in the Standard, but it was drawn up not for the purposes of comparative evaluation but for the purposes of suggesting minimum achievements for an average, strong, country congregation.

The points covered in this Par Standard for Country Churches and the standing of the churches in the two counties studied are given in the following tables.

APPENDIX III

Clay County, Iowa

		Number of Churches Answering Affirmatively	*Proportion of Possible Affirmative Answers*
Adequate Physical Equipment	Up-to-date Parsonage	25	60%
	Adequate Church Auditorium Space	32	
	Social and Recreational Equipment	5	
	Well Equipped Kitchen	—	
	Organ or Piano	—	
	Sunday School Rooms	16	
	Stereopticon or Moving Picture Machine	4	
	Sanitary Toilets	—	
	Horse Sheds or Parking Space	30	
	Property in Good Repair and Condition	31	
Pastor	Resident Pastor	21	67%
	Full Time Pastor	16	
	Service Every Sunday	27	
	Minimum Salary of $1,200	25	
Finance	Annual Church Budget Adopted Annually	20	53%
	Every Member Canvass	18	
	Benevolences Equal to 25% Current Expenses	12	
Meetings	Coöperation with Other Churches in Community	—	
	Systematic Evangelism	—	
Parish	Church Serves All Racial and Occupational Groups	—	
Religious Education	Sunday School Held Entire Year	30	38%
	Sunday School Enrollment Equal to Church Membership	13	
	Attempt to Bring Pupils into Church	18	
	Special Instruction for Church Membership	10	
	Teacher Training or Normal Class	1	
	Provision for Special Leadership Training	3	
Program of Work	Organized Activities for Age and Sex Groups	1	41%
	Coöperation with Boards and Denominational Agencies	26	
	Program Adopted Annually, 25% of Membership Participating	—	
	Church Reaching Entire Community	—	

The eight points left blank cannot be answered definitely from the data on schedules used in this survey.

JENNINGS COUNTY, INDIANA

		Number of Churches Answering Affirmatively	*Proportion of Possible Affirmative Answers*
Adequate Physical Equipment	Up-to-date Parsonage	5	40%
	Adequate Church Auditorium Space	41	
	Social and Recreational Equipment	5	
	Well Equipped Kitchen	—	
	Organ or Piano	—	
	Sunday School Rooms	10	
	Stereopticon or Moving Picture Machine	—	
	Sanitary Toilets	—	
	Horse Sheds or Parking Space	33	
	Property in Good Repair and Condition	28	
Pastor	Resident Pastor	6	20%
	Full Time Pastor	4	
	Service Every Sunday	20	
	Minimum Salary of $1,200	4	
Finance	Annual Church Budget Adopted Annually	14	39%
	Every Member Canvass	19	
	Benevolences Equal to 25% Current Expenses	18	
Meetings	Coöperation with Other Churches in Community	—	
	Systematic Evangelism	—	
Parish	Church Serves All Racial and Occupational Groups	—	
Religious Education	Sunday School Held Entire Year	35	28%
	Sunday School Enrollment Equal to Church Membership	13	
	Attempt to Bring Pupils into Church	20	
	Special Instruction for Church Membership	2	
	Teacher Training or Normal Class	3	
	Provision for Special Leadership Training	1	
Program of Work	Organized Activities for Age and Sex Groups	1	42%
	Coöperation with Boards and Denominational Agencies	35	
	Program Adopted Annually, 25% of Membership Participating	—	
	Church Reaching Entire Community	—	

The eight points left blank cannot be answered definitely from the data on the schedules used in this survey.

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Published by GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY, New York

FOR

COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS SURVEYS

111 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK